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SUVLA BAY

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By JUVENIS

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

DEDICATED
TO
A. A. P.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

It seems to the author that some words of apology are necessary for his presumption in offering this book to the public. For it is not a broad survey of large and important operations, only a little personal account of the experiences of himself and his platoon, and in the second half of himself alone, when his platoon was gone. The tale may not be sensational, but then it contains no lies. It may even be dull, but then it is consecutive. It is not humorous, for the author does not care to joke with serious things.

If it helps a soldier, here and there, to remember his own campaign, and a civilian or two to realise something of a soldier's life in war, better than disconnected tales of valour and of pathos, the author will feel that he was justified.

The author is indebted to the Editor of *The English Review* for permission to print in this volume some of the chapters which appeared in its columns.

_____, CAPTAIN,

London, 1916.

X Division.

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CONCERNING OUR UNIFORM

*Ireland watched us as we grew
Out of "civvies" into "blue,"
Out of "blue" into "khaki" —
Then we sailed across the sea.*

*England watched us growing still,
Out of "khaki" into "drill,"
Winding on the long "pagris" —
Then we sailed across the seas.*

*Mitylene watched us next,
E'en in "khaki drill" perplexed,
Every single garment shed
But the helmets on our head.*

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CHAPTER I

THE DAY BEFORE THE LANDING

MOST of us thought the landlocked harbour, since described in Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatch as "an island base 120 miles from Suvla Bay," quite the most beautiful place that could possibly exist. There was no casino there, it is true, nor any tennis-courts, but for sheer beauty it was hard to beat—at least, so we thought when first we steamed in through the long and narrow entrance, lined as it was to the water's edge with olive-groves and twinkling farms, rude wooden piers and whitewashed villages half hidden in vines and figs, pumpkins and pomegranates, and here and there a group of olive-skinned inhabitants in flowing, coloured garments, waving their welcome from the shady path and blowing kisses. But that was many days ago, and by now, the 5th of August, we were getting rather tired of doing nothing, in a transport, far away from sight or sound of war; although, the ship's censor told us, one imaginative man wrote home, "The noise is awful, with shrapnel bursting all around!"

But, except for that man, most of us were bored. The game of "shuffle-board," played on a sunny deck, is an excellent one ; but no shuffle-board season should be longer than a fortnight. Cocktails, especially our patent "Gallipolis," are very good indeed ; but, when both gin and ice are exhausted, they lose a great deal of their charm. Bridge, too, and poker—but even a purser will turn. Again, one cannot organise "sweeps" on the day's run when the ship is at anchor ; and regattas, even, pall at last. In the end, I remember, we fell back upon the "match, hatch and dispatch" column of the only newspaper on board, getting up books on the date and cause of death, the age of the twins, the church of marriage, and the value of the will. But this was in the evening.

The 5th of August was a hot day. All August days are hot in landlocked harbours off the coast of Asia Minor, but that particular day was hotter still. A few big transports, a mine-layer or two, allied torpedo craft, three cruisers and a battleship were standing on a sea of deep-blue glass under a fiery sky : all pointing up the gulf towards the "Anglo-French" Kafeinon, half hidden in the olive trees upon the shore. A cloud of dust was creeping slowly round the zigzag

harbour road, showing where a battalion was keeping fit. The tow of boats that had taken them ashore was bubbling back to rest in the shade of their mother's stern.

The sea was dotted, besides, with all manner of painted native craft ; some with pink decks were rowing-boats, borne down with melons, grapes, tomatoes (huge) and many other brightly coloured fruit. These clustered round the troopships' sides, where many a tanned arm reached out of the "F"-deck portholes with an English penny (all coins are welcome to the Greek) and sometimes even (oh ! tell it not in Whitehall !) with regulation shirts or khaki—anyhow, the main thing was that the arm was drawn back into the belly of the ship with fruit.

Other boats there were, big fishing-smacks that sailed majestically inshore, looking for all the world like the vessels that carried the Athenians thither in the classic days. With bright-blue sides, lined with green, red-headed snakes, the gay craft glided about. Their decks and pits were filled with bronzed and naked warriors, each with his helmet and towel—only these were Irish soldiers, not Athenian, bent on bathing rather than on revenge. For, let it be here said, that in all the world there is no better bathing-place

than is the base 120 miles from Suvla Bay. We all enjoyed it, officers and men. My own bathes were performed in the company of a few good friends, including my servant, who was of a great bulk and an excellent swimmer, so that I could not be drowned. We used to set out in the *Holy Trinity*, the *Argo*, or the *Lion*, sailed by Greek reservists, who wore the Turkish and Bulgarian war medals and could not understand a word we said. Then, when we had reached a spot where coal-dust and yesterday's potato-peel floated no more, we would dive in, and soon, with air-collars round our necks, pith helmets on our heads, and cigarettes between our lips, float lazily about, thanking God that we were not for Flanders—creeping ignominiously across the channel in some mouldy “tramp.”

Such were those days. We thought little of the War. We had no letters and no newspapers to remind us of it. Indeed, we were beginning to believe that this eastern war was all a scheme for showing us the charms of the Levant—a Kitchener's Continental Tour, a reward for patriotic enlistment, with the censorship thrown in to keep it from the taxpayer. It is true that at night, sometimes, before the moon was up, we used to see the sky lit up a fiery red to eastward by the

flames of burning Asia—the whole coast was a chain of blazing villages; but the moon soon rose, and then the smoke looked like a long cloud-bank, and the warships shone most saintly in that landlocked harbour.

We began to grow angry with that moon. As long as the moon was shining of a night we could not hope to go to war, whither—for few of us had been before—inaction made us long to go.

However, the moon was waning, and when I was on watch, from 12 to 4 a.m., on the night of the 5th of August, it was dark as a night could be. Going the rounds of a large troopship in an August Mediterranean night is not an exhilarating job; but it was always possible that one of the 2,500 Irishmen on board might have dropped a lighted cigarette somewhere before he fell asleep—and falling asleep is no easy task in such an atmosphere, though sentries might find it easier, perhaps.

It was after my third round, while I was on the bridge, reporting the absence of submarines, fires, and similar dangers, to the ship's officer, that the signalling began. The harbour fairly danced with dots and dashes! I began to feel quite important as the long message came, detail by detail, from the general's ship, of the orders for the morrow,

for I realised that I was the first on board to get the long-expected news. But, alas ! the orders were so vague !—to be ready to transfer the details of the —— at 10 a.m. ; to disembark the —— at twelve ; to fill all water-bottles ; to issue respirators and iron-rations ; to take one thing and to leave another ; to do this and to do that—whereas all we wanted to know was : Where on earth were we going ?

Smyrna, Thessalonica, Bulair, Anzac, Helles, Egypt, Aden, Enos and even India—all had their supporters among the saloon-strategists. Even Suvla Bay had been suggested by one subaltern, but had been squashed at once by another, who produced a map and pointed to that salubrious spot with scorn, underlining with no uncertain finger the ominous words “ Salt Lake (dry in summer) ” that stretched across the bay, and then, for emphasis, said, “ Have a drink ? ”

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CHAPTER II

THE WAY TO SUVLA

THE 6th of August was a windy day, very fine and very hot in the island base 120 miles from Suvla Bay, where the ships that were to take us into action came frisking up the harbour's mouth like little lambs and, running alongside the sheep-like transports, tied up.

We all crowded up on deck to inspect our new quarters, hanging over the side and gazing down upon her decks with that proud feeling that those on board the larger of two ships invariably experience. Yet it was with certain feelings of reverence as well that we scanned this ex-cross-Channel steamer in her garb of battleship grey. For had she not been under fire? Yes, sure enough, there were patches on her squat funnels and bullet-holes on her bridge. And what were those dark stains upon her decks?

But further meditation was cut short by orders to fall in—and a most uncomfortable parade it was, on the scorching decks, with bulging packs and bursting haversacks,

innumerable rounds of ammunition, a couple of respirators each, blankets and ground-sheets, tins of bully-beef, iron-rations, bags of biscuits and full water-bottles, not to mention revolvers, field-glasses, compasses, map-cases, writing materials, note-books, mess-tins, and such other personal impedimenta as each one thought essential for the unnatural life for which we were now bound. Let no man fresh from France despise the "Christmas-tree" equipment that we carried then, remembering that we were going to a spot that was innocent of inhabitants, of food, of water, of wood, of grass or of straw, of bricks or of mortar, houses or shops, shade or shelter, road or railway : to a place where the elements, summer and winter, would be against us ; with little hope of mails from home and only the minimum necessary of supplies : for our Havre and our Boulogne were tiny jetties or the bare beach itself : our very drinking-water produced by machinery drop by drop, or brought in tins by sea from the corners of the Empire.

So it was with the most elaborate preparation and cumbrous equipment, and with the most motley collections of battleships and cruisers, torpedo-craft and submarines, mine-layers and mine-sweepers, lighters and pin-

naces, barges and horse-boats, water-ships and food-ships, transports and colliers, hospital-ships, aeroplanes and balloons, mules and horses, donkeys and camels, and armies drawn from places as wide apart as the British Isles, Australia, Africa, France, India and New Zealand, that the expedition to the Dardanelles was made—truly the best equipped and the most powerful force that had ever set out overseas. And think, too, of that expedition of long ago, that set out from another Empire founded on the mastery of the seas—the expedition of the Athenians to Syracuse. How alike the expeditions were : whether from the view of the enthusiasm with which they were launched, of the high hopes of a speedy and glorious consummation of their objects, or of the thoroughness and splendour of their preparation and the magnificence of their equipment. From Syracuse, as from Gallipoli, to the capital across the seas came back the same demand for huge and speedy reinforcements. In Athens, as in London, came the sudden readjustment of the temper in which the stupendous difficulties to be overcome were realised, and abroad the same hesitation of the neutrals, the same demand for a great and signal victory, and the same intrigues : and Syra-

cuse turned for help to Sparta as Turkey to Berlin. The fortunes of the expeditions, too, were much the same—the sickness, the disappointments and, alas ! the “ fatal inertia ” in the momentous crisis, were the same. Thank God we cannot follow, now, the parallel of the Athenians to the end. By their miraculous evacuation of the so-often-promised land, our armies have been spared the final horror of the stone-quarries of a Syracuse. Thank God we had no Nicias in command when the last moments came !

This is no place for moralising on the Pride of Sea Power, but Pride of Sea Power was certainly the feeling that was uppermost, and was bound to be uppermost, in us on our way from the Motherland to Suvla Bay. We felt it as we steamed slowly out of Devonport, past the cheering crowds on Plymouth Hoe and the long one-noted “ Hip ! Hip ! Hoorahs ! ” of the sirens and hooters of the crowded and imposing shipping and workshops there. We felt it when the black destroyers foamed about us down the English Channel, as they had done two months before on our way to Holyhead from Ireland. We felt it at Gibraltar and Malta, bristling with masts and guns ; at Alexandria’s huge and crowded quays ; at Mudros Harbour, filled

with the ships of freight and ships of war of half a dozen nations working with us. We felt it when we steamed into action out of Mitylene. We felt it under fire at Suvla Bay, in the gigantic hospital ships that brought so many of us racing into safety once again. But most of all were we made aware of it by the successful evacuation of Gallipoli.

This digression has left us standing in rows upon the decks of the transport, where we had spent a month. But we did not stand there long. In a very short time our stores, our ammunition and ourselves were all aboard the smaller ship, scrambling for places in the shadows of the life-boats, and flinging down our burdensome equipment on the decks.

The heating moments of transhipment being over, we began to "sit up and take notice." We watched the other transports disgorging their contents; we explored the bowels of our boat for cabins and saloons; we bid innumerable farewells to our late ship's officers; and we gave them and the ship three cheers. Those of us who had any money left after so long at sea bought up her remaining cigarettes, which soon ran out. The less fortunate pretended not to want them, but their turn soon came. For the quarter-

master began opening some mysterious bags and cases that he had been keeping in the dark, and issued our first official ration of cigarettes and tobacco, together with some shamrock-covered envelopes containing further cigarettes from "Friends in Ireland."

And then the crews began to shout, and ropes were cast off and engine bells rang and the Pipers piped, and off we glided, cheering and laughing, from the bigger boat, and soon were steaming past the olive groves and farms and villages, out of the harbour mouth, into the splendid evening sea, dark blue and flecked with foam and edged with the copper-coloured cliffs of the islands.

We were one of half a dozen ships in line ahead, and when the first turned to the left the Landing-in-Asia-Minor Party said, "I told you so!" to the rest. But soon the line made a right wheel to the north, and the Peninsula Party were finally triumphant. As a matter of fact we had been given the most elaborate maps of Gallipoli an hour or two before, but—"what's in a map?" Did not the General Staff have many maps prepared of many parts of Europe and Asia too? Even the wily Turk was deceived by such, so why not simple subalterns?

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE BY THE SHORE

OUR search for comfort in the bowels of the little ship was not too well rewarded. She had not been built for the Mediterranean, and still less for the stealthy transport of a battalion to Gallipoli by night. Every port-hole was screwed down and boarded over to conceal the lights, and there were no fans below. The result was an ill-savoured furnace. Not knowing when we might be called upon to land, we could not afford to strip, so to sleep below was out of the question; we poured with sweat, and finished up on the closely packed deck. The night fell suddenly, and we slowed down, for fear of reaching the rendezvous too early. With the fall of darkness came the extinction of pipes and cigarettes (enemy's submarines are credited with powerful sight). On deck the wind was cold, the boards were sticky with salt dew, and hard. We longed for the dawn.

Just before dawn, at about three o'clock, hot tea was issued to us all, and, stumbling down the ladder from the boat-deck, I

stepped right into a dixie full of it, which some genius had put at the bottom of the stairs for safety. However, I found my kit and returned, without repeating the horrible incident, to join the officers, on the front of the boat-deck, who were now peering through the darkness to the north-east, over the star-board bow, with field glasses.

Soon we made out some lights, red and green, in a row, and quickly two more rows like them, moving along with us. They were hospital ships.

We had scarcely realised their cheerful presence, when away to the east we saw some starry rockets and shells flying and bursting high in the sky, and the twinkle of distant gunfire. It was quite silent. We did not hear the guns, we could not see the ships or the shore, though we felt the presence of both.

We rushed on past the distant hint of the horrors of a battle in the night, and knew then that the grim slopes of Achi Baba were not for us, and that we should not land under the shadow of the River Clyde at Helles. With something of a thrill we understood that our fresh Army Corps was destined for fresh fields. So on we glided into the cold darkness that comes before the dawn.

Suddenly the light began to grow and the outlines of hills and warships became just visible. When we had made out one ship then we saw them all, as fast as we turned our heads, behind us and in front, to right and to left, all gliding in towards the shore—troopships and warships, silently and relentlessly gliding into the bay. On our right, by what we could now distinguish as the cliffs at Anzac, many were there already at anchor, and now we could hear the guns as well as see their sulphurous flashes, on land and sea.

Then, all at once, a terrible roar broke out on the gloomy heights, the roar of rifles and machine guns, shrapnel and high explosive: it never slackened, it never died; it seemed too loud and too innumerable to last; yet on it went, and grew. "The Australians are making a dawn attack," we said to each other, "and we shall be too late." Still, we glided on among our fellow transports in due order into Suvla Bay, and then, swinging round as we got into line with Lala Baba and Suvla Cape, dropped anchor in the thick of them.

It must have been then that the Turks saw the truth. What an awful and unforgettable sight we must have been to them—an army gliding up irresistible out of the night,

backed by the invincible Armadas of England ! Be that as it may, the noise of battle away to the east swept round towards us as the sun sprang up behind grim Sari Bair, and the 'din of firing to our front and left burst out, from Anafarta and the hills round Suvla Bay. The new sun showed the water, calm and smooth, splashed up by rifle bullets and shrapnel and the waterspouts of shells. We were told to lie down on deck : some glass on the bridge came rattling down among us : the fire-hoses were turned on and the decks ran with water : a few stray shrapnel bullets pattered down on us, and the man next me pulled one of them in triumph from his thick pith helmet. For the first time since in the butts at Aldershot we heard the crack and hiss and whine of bullets passing close.

From our damp and uncomfortable posture we watched the transshipment of the troops from the transports to the motor-lighters that were to take them to the beach—weird boats those motor-lighters were, that we now recognised as having passed on the high seas, straining and lumbering at their hawsers behind slow tramps, down the Bay of Biscay, a month before. They had been just too far away to be made out at that time, and no one dreamed that one day we should be

asked to go in those uncouth, heavy, shapeless, wave-washed monstrosities, with great platforms sticking out in front, to land in Suvla Bay.

Some were now panting up along the transports to our right and left and hurrying away with their pale khaki crowd of troops. Some were already at the beaches—or as near to them as the shallows would allow—erratically shelled from the hills above. One or two had run aground. Others were circling about in shore, as though to seek a spot where they might rest their keels, weighed down by companies of infantry. From early dawn we saw these lighters plodding in, and all the previous night they had worked on unceasingly: for days and nights before had they taken men and stores to Anzac: their small, great-hearted crews were wearied to dropping: their eyes were dull and bloodshot from want of sleep: themselves all black with smoke and oil, and stiff with the endless loading and unloading stores. And of the boats themselves the iron decks were dented and scarred and pierced with rifle bullets.

Meanwhile the transports were all anchored in the bay, and a mine-layer steamed across behind us, dropping a string of mines that fell down bouncing upon the water as she went.

The warships crept in closer and let fly their heavy broadsides, from half a dozen guns at once, against the Turkish batteries.

Soon after this the Turkish small arms fire died down, and we stood up again to watch the progress of the battle in the bay.

All at once I noticed a tiny speck wheeling high up in the sky. At first I thought it was a monoplane, but its movements soon showed that it was a bird, a big bird, hovering over us. Immediately I thought of the eagle that Agamemnon, lord of the hosts of Greece, had seen not far from this same spot when he set foot upon the windy plains of Troy thousands of years ago. I tried to remember the details of the story, but my knowledge of the Classics seemed to have melted away. All I could remember was that the omen was good, so I told the rest about it; but they laughed and said the bird above us was only a vulture. Be that as it may, there was no mistaking the next thing we saw in the air. It was an aeroplane, close above us, making a great noise.

"One of our 'spotters,' I suppose," we said, and raised our field glasses. But no, two iron crosses stretched across her slanting wings, and we had hardly time to realise on which side she was when bombs came

dropping down. Four were intended for our boat, and indeed came close enough, one of them sending sheets of water across our stern. But the shrapnel from the Fleet was bursting round her now, with little puffs of pure white smoke, clean and fairy-like against the dark blue of the sky, and soon the Taube flew off towards the east.

Just then the transport next us was holed by a shell in the water-line and began to take a heavy list to starboard. Fortunately, the troops had all been taken off; so, weighing anchor, she steamed slowly away, and we lost sight of her in the excitement of gazing at the battle that spread for miles before our eyes on Suvla Bay.

To the left, looking east, was Suvla Cape, and Lala Baba promontory to our right, with Anzac rising up beyond it. Before us spread the valley behind the bay, running back in a huge flat crescent to the ring of hills that stretched unbroken all around, their two great arms running down to the sea at Suvla Cape and Anzac. Between Lala Baba and Suvla lay the great Salt Lake, gleaming white and dry in the fierce sun, and separated from the sea by a narrow spit of sand.

The troops we could see best were landing under Lala Baba, lighter-load after lighter-

load, and the shrapnel was bursting freely over them. We saw the lighters creeping slowly in under the low cliffs and after a little pause long lines of men coming up at the double over the top and moving across an open patch to disappear again into the scrub. We could just distinguish their separate forms through field glasses. Hundreds and hundreds were passing, line after line, and working over to the left and front, towards a little isolated hillock. Then, after a pause, we saw the twinkling glitter of countless bayonets speeding through the bush. The shrapnel clouds grew more continuous, the crackle of rifle fire grew louder, the lines rushed on : figures now and then were visible for a moment against the scars of sand, and almost at once we could see other lines spring up with gleaming bayonets and flee into the scrub and disappear. The hill was carried. We had seen the fight as through a glass, darkly. The bravery of the troops we could not see, but the white puffs of bursting shrapnel, the rattle of rifle fire and the glitter of the steadily advancing bayonets were eloquent enough.

Such scenes were being enacted everywhere along the line; and, though individual valour was invisible half a mile away, yet we

could judge the temper of the troops from the sheen of the lines of naked bayonets. Their steadiness under fire was clear, from the unfaltering progress of those long, thin lines of dots upon the gleaming white of the Salt Lake and the sand. Had we been nearer we should have seen the surface of the dried-up lake alive and dancing with the salt cast up by streams of bullets; as it was we could only see the shell-bursts overhead.

We longed to be on shore. If *other* units of the New Army could behave like that, there would be no holding *us*! Indeed, no finer or more inspiring spectacle could have been set before the eyes of troops about to land. Too far away to see the casualties as horrible, we could think only of the advancing line of bayonets. We longed to be on shore! Meanwhile a battery of field artillery was galloping up to the fresh-gained hill, without an instant's delay—and it was welcome. But the Turks had batteries too.

On the right of our transport, within hailing distance, was a cruiser belching broadsides at the hills by Suvla Cape. The din was terrific, and the very water seemed quivering and aflame with the blast of her guns. Huge mauve and yellow spurts of smoke and sand burst up, six at a time, where

the shells went home. They were searching for a Turkish battery hidden in the scrub. Salvo after salvo did she fire, and at last the battery ceased firing. We could find no trace of it next day.

All round it was the same. Directed by the signals of a spotting balloon, and by innumerable flags and cones and semaphores, cruisers, monitors and torpedo-boat destroyers were bombarding heavily. The hills all round the bay were crowned with the heavy, golden clouds of smoke from the naval shells, together with the white puffs of the answering Turkish guns, while in the plain between them the rifles and machine guns rattled and the bayonets gleamed.

Men were now landing right, left, and in front. Horse-boats loaded with mules and guns, and motor-lighters packed with infantry, were swarming in. Surely our turn must have come by now? Who was the idiot that was keeping the finest regiment in the bay so long inactive?

CHAPTER IV

WE LAND

At last, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, when we had been watching the battle spread out in a panorama before us for twelve hours, the lighters came alongside for us, and took off "A," "B" and "C" companies. I was in "D," so had to be content with watching for a little longer. At any rate, a personal interest was now added to the view; and the lighters would soon be back.

The three companies lost no time in getting aboard, and soon were making for the shore at Suvla Cape ("A" Beach), where already several other lighters were tied up disembarking troops. But suddenly a little hitch arose. One of the lighters seemed to be aground. The water there was shallow and strewn with rocks; and, worse than that, as the troops just landed were reforming on the beach, a terrific explosion took place there. Huge yellow bursts of smoke rose up. Through our glasses we could plainly see the men near by it. They seemed to lean inwards towards the centre

of the burst, and then were flung this way and that; some to lie still and some to disappear. Almost immediately several more explosions in rapid succession rent the air, and for some moments we lost sight of the troops altogether in the clouds of smoke and sand. The Turks must be tossing down gigantic shells from the Anafarta hills; or perhaps from Asia across the coveted narrows! What marvellous shooting! They must have taken the range to a yard, for they certainly could not see the little beach. But someone told us that they were not shells, but land mines, set off by being trodden on. I was thankful our battalion was still safe upon the sea.

The time wore on apace, and the lighters were still hovering off the beach, when a thunderstorm broke out, together with a wind that lashed the sea from a dead calm into foam-crested waves. It lasted nearly an hour and all was calm again.

The storm seemed to have changed the colour of the whole scene. Light khaki drill was a dull brown, the scrub was greener, the flashes from the guns a lemoner yellow, as the sun dived down behind us into the sea by Samothrace, and the first three companies of our battalion jumped on shore. We had

just time to see them forming up and moving off when darkness fell. The warships kept up the cannonade, and once more, as in the early morning, we saw the twinkle of guns on distant heights.

It was midnight when a lighter came panting up at last to take us off together with the stores. The stores were put on first—boxes of ammunition, cases of rations and lime-juice, and many dixies. Lastly, we ourselves jumped on and crowded down into the lighter's belly.

The engine started, shaking us like an ancient motor-bus, and off we went. There were no lights on board and no lights on the beach, and the journey, though very short—perhaps six hundred yards—took a long time. The skipper of our new craft was almost drunk with weariness. He could scarcely stand on his feet and hardly see or hear, and was extremely irritable. He tried to lose his temper with his junior on the look-out for'ard, but was too tired to raise his voice sufficiently to swear. I have never seen a man so overworked and utterly exhausted. His uniform and face and hands were black with oil and grime. He began to munch a thick and oily sandwich listlessly.

At length, about 2 a.m., we got on shore. There were many forms around us sleeping huddled up in the sand and in the low scrub beyond it, jumbled anyhow. We found an empty patch, and there the company gathered and tumbled down and fell asleep. I went a few yards off them and lay down. There were others lying near me in the scrub. Many were groaning in their sleep.

After an hour or two I woke, and, with the company commander and my fellow-subalterns, roused up the men. We found—for the light was faintly rising now—that we had been sleeping among the wounded of another regiment. They were lying there in the sand, for the most part, though some were under a large tarpaulin, propped up at the corners on sticks. It was a hospital—or rather a clearing station, I suppose.

A few yards off two nameless wooden crosses stood over a fresh grave. A man was standing looking at them. "I suppose they like it, sir," he said, turning towards me for a moment, and then strolled away.

When the men were fallen in we moved up along a rough track through the scrub inland. On our right, over a little mound, was the dry salt lake, on our left a long ridge rising to about six hundred feet,

running inland. A succession of spurs stretched from it to the plain. The other side of it and behind us was the sea.

We had so far found no trace or word of the battalion, but we had not gone far when we met the quartermaster, by a pile of packs. So there we stopped to take our packs off and to add them to the pile. We were told the regiment had gone on. So on we went to find it. A long spur running down from the left was hiding us from the enemy. When we came up to it at length we halted in the gully and got out our bully-beef and biscuits, while scouts went on for news.

It was a cheerful little gully, in the bright sun, with a dried-up watercourse running through it, overhung with quite large little shrubs. Some of these were covered with pale flowers that looked like our wild roses, but which turned out to be all of one piece, petals and centre, made of a leathery substance, darkening into brown at the centre and pink at the edges. Another kind was like huge scentless purple mignonette. The ground was covered besides with minute-leaved wild thyme, that smelt delicious as we trampled it, and withered veitch. This thyme grew crawling over the sand in patches all over Suvla Bay ; and whenever the Turks,

alive or dead, began to pollute the air too potently we could generally find some slight relief in gathering thyme and crushing it between our fingers under our offended noses. While we were waiting for the scouts' return, when we had breakfasted off the bully-beef and biscuits, and the men were scratching vainly about for water in the dried-up water-course, we sat in the bush on the spur of the hill and contemplated the scene.

The sun was already very hot, and we looked with envy out to sea, across the salt lake, at the many-coloured fleet of transports and warships (they were at it with their guns again). They looked so cool and comfortable on the calm blue sea. Below us gleamed the salt lake, covered occasionally by a line of dots, and once by some stampeding mules. Troops were still landing here and there along the beach beyond. To our right front, a mile or so away, we could see a brigade massed under cover of a low hill in the centre of the plain, as though about to debouch for an attack. Our actual lines (if they existed) across the plain were invisible owing to the bushy scrub.

The other side of the plain, to the east, the naval shells were bursting on the hills and over Anafarta town.

Nowhere could we see any traces of our regiment, and when the scouts returned, reporting nothing but Turkish snipers in the scrub directly ahead and no signs of our men to the right, we went up with the company through the gully to the left, and found at length the remnants of the battalion among whose casualties we had slept the night before. They had been relieved and were resting. They begged for water, but we were short ourselves—just one water-bottleful each had been given us on the transport. A little had been used already on board and at breakfast this morning, and there was little doubt that many of the water-bottles were nearly empty, and chances of refilling in the future were a trifle vague. A fully equipped soldier in such a climate is a thirsty man.

We left them, following the gully to the top of the ridge, where I chanced upon a rifle whose number-plate bore the regimental stamp. This set us on our way up over the hill and along the path that ran just under the ridge-line itself, on the other side of the ridge. We were now moving along a tiny track, rough and dusty and strewn with boulders, parallel to the sea, that lay some five or six hundred feet

below us, about three-quarters of a mile downhill.

We had not gone far when we met a kindly general, who bade us keep straight on and look out for snipers ; and after about a mile we found the battalion at last, behind a little peak rising above the rest of the ridge. It was the front of our position, and the relics of yesterday's battle lay strewn about and were being collected—equipment, ammunition, clothing, casualties and chunks of shells.

Every now and then the almost imperceptible breeze carried with it a whiff of carrion from our front ; and snipers' bullets sighed past fitfully.

Two of our companies were extended thinly down to the sea, from battalion headquarters on the crest, which the third company was holding, together with the machine guns, protected by a few sandbags and rocks. The ground was so difficult as to make a decent trench an impossible dream. My own company lay in reserve along the ridge, trying to put up a little cover and a little shelter from the burning sun ; but the latter they could not achieve.

I sat with the " flag-waggers " and " buzzers " behind a little sandbag spur, and, in

the intervals of his buzzing and wagging, talked to the signal officer.

The ridge that we were on hid Suvla Bay and the Fleet. Only one ship could we see—a destroyer anchored almost at our feet. The water was calm and clear. We could see the bottom for hundreds of yards away from the shore, and make out the wicked-looking Kishlar Rocks, sticking right up like trees from the sea-floor to the surface, where a thin line of foam showed them just awash. We longed for a bathe.

With field glasses we could just distinguish the men on the destroyer's bridge, who would now and then call us up, with their flags, to signal news. The only news message I can remember being sent that day was the report of the sinking of a Turkish battleship that morning in the Sea of Marmora: a report which I later saw confirmed in the *Times* at a Lemnos hospital. For news from the Fleet had to be taken with a pinch of salt sometimes—*e.g.*, "Botha landed at Krithia yesterday with 50,000 Boers," or "Zeppelin raid on London: 80,000 casualties"; besides innumerable "The Narrows forced" and "Achi Baba fallen."

After a while an officer of the Royal

Naval Division came along and stopped with us for a chat. He was hot and dusty from looking for two signallers who had been missing for some time, and whom, I believe, he never found. His division had a machine gun party on the ridge that used to make most admirable practice on the local Turks.

We began to be anxious to move on, as the day grew older and hotter and little seemed to be happening in our immediate front, though there was always the noise of firing on our right in the valley.

Of water there was no news, but rumours trickled through of a little far off on the beach a mile or two away—a place, report said, where one had to wait for hours for a turn; where many water-bottles disappeared; where many brawls occurred; where men were mad.

The day wore slowly on. Here and there a sniper's bullet found its mark, and two sweating men would bear a stretcher back along the ragged little path.

Near midday we tried to have dinner, but we could muster little appetite. The bully-beef was so very salt, and we could spare no water to soak out the salt; so that eating made us thirstier.

In the afternoon I was told to send my

platoon back to the beach with the water-bottles of all the company and try to get them filled. So off they went.

They had not been long gone, when orders came for my company and another to return to brigade headquarters as a guard at dusk. Dusk came at length, and still my platoon had not come back from watering.- The companies went off without them, and I remained to bring them on behind.

At last, when it was quite dark, the platoon came straggling back among the scrub and boulders. The path was quite invisible. The men were tired. They had had a struggle for the water and a long, hot climb.

We picked up our equipment and moved off along the hill to find brigade headquarters. It was rather like looking for plovers' eggs on a moor on a dark night, but after a weary scramble I was assisted by a sentry who had a shot at me, missing both me and the platoon; so I knew we were there at last. We were led down to the left past the headquarters, which appeared to consist of a head or two sticking up out of the earth, to the side of a hill where the rest of the company were sleeping, and told to follow their example. But it was no easy

task. The spent bullets from some action in the distance kept whistling down among us ; yet no one seemed to be getting hit, and at length we fell asleep. Blankets and ground-sheets had not yet come up (we had piled them on the beach), but a respirator in its bag, inflated with a few biscuits, is an excellent pillow for a tired man.

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CHAPTER V

AT THE BACK OF A BATTLE

WE were up before dawn and filed down into a trench that had been dug by the R.E. the day before, and ran along a big spur under the ridge; and then we realised once more that while the part of the ridge between the crest and the sea, as well as the crest itself, was in our hands, the ground to the right of it was No Man's Land. So that our line at Suvla Bay on the left flank resembled the letter Z. This particular morning we were in a trench along the lower arm of this Z.

When dawn, with its special danger, was past, we moved ahead again with only unaimed rifle fire upon us, into a little gully, where we were told to wait in reserve for an attack that was proceeding to our front. This was on the right of the big ridge and below it.

Those hours of waiting were none too pleasant. Unceasingly the bullets whistled over us. But as long as we did not crawl up over the spur's edge we were quite safe. Only one or two were wounded, and they were men

who had been carrying cases of iron-rations up, over the rising ground behind us where we had left the trench.

The sun was blazing away at its hottest, and there was little shade—only as much as there is in the heather on a moor. Our heather was the tiniest oaks imaginable, with big green acorns and little leaves like baby holly, too prickly to sit on.

The water-bottles, brought back the night before, had been only half filled, and little or none was left of the water now. The men were thirstier than ever. Expecting every moment to go into action, we could not send a party off to fight for water. We set a guard on the path to the beach, and lay and baked. I was unpatriotic enough to think of Lager beer.

A party of stretcher-bearers took up their position near us, waiting for the action to subside.

Now and then, above us, the bush would rustle and a man dripping with blood crawl through, a great relief spreading over his grey face at the sight of the Red Cross brassards. Wonderfully enough, from among our thirsty men there was always one or another who came out to offer his water-bottle to the wounded.

From time to time, besides the wounded, a man, beside himself with thirst, his lips all black and caked, would stumble past us. Once, indeed, one of our own men rose up with rifle and bayonet and tried to wrest a comrade's water-bottle away, that had betrayed itself by an unmistakable gurgle. He was seized and disarmed before any harm was done.

We could not shoot a madman. Someone gave him a mouthful of water, and he was placed under arrest. We settled down again in the sun. Soon afterwards a dirty slip of paper was brought up to the captain by a N.C.O. It was a note from the arrested man, begging to be sent at once upon any dangerous job that might assist the company. The note was very sincere. The man was told to dig a latrine, and then released.

It was about this time that the ravages of dysentery first became apparent, some of the men being too weak to stand.

Late in the afternoon a strange procession was seen advancing up the valley towards us—a dozen mules, each with two water-skins! But, alas! the water was not for us. It was for the troops who had been fighting to our front. Poor devils! they needed it. We could guess something of their need by the

condition of the half-mad creatures who came back out of the action. I heard afterwards that some had died of that need. Anyhow, we were allowed four biscuit tins, nearly half-full of water, for the company.

With the approach of night the battle ended, and we were told to climb the hill once more and go back to the battalion where we had left it the previous evening on a crest of the ridge, reporting at brigade headquarters on the way.

So we set off once more, in single file, up the steep winding path in the dark, and came at length to headquarters. There we were told that the battalion was in a farther advanced position along the ridge, and that we were to go out to their left, to carry down the line as far as the sea. Meanwhile, we could have some water if we left a party behind with the water-bottles. By some misfortune it fell to the lot of my platoon to stay for the water, while the rest of the company filed off into the dark.

Bullets from snipers kept us lying down, and the process of filling the two hundred odd water-bottles was a slow one. Apparently, though in the dark it was not possible to be sure, mules had brought up the water from the beach in skins, and these had been

emptied into tanks. After a while the bottles were all filled, and off we went. But unfortunately in the hurry and confusion of the darkness many of the corks had been mislaid, and many water-bottles unavoidably changed by the official fillers at headquarters; some were even lost, taken away by some straggler's eager hand that found its way there in the blackness of the night. Bullets, fatigue and dysentery are apt to make men careless of trifles.

Our progress to the place rather vaguely appointed was very slow and difficult. It is hard to calculate distances in complete darkness over uneven ground.

The little path, near the crest, was too dangerous to use, owing to snipers, who, lying concealed by day, with stores of food and ammunition, among the thick bushes and boulders in the wilderness between the hill-top and the sea, crept out at night to watch for a shot against the sky-line.

Now and then, as we went farther on, a sentry would challenge us, or, nearer the front, have a bad shot at us. But they never seemed to know where our battalion was. At length, however, after several hours of scrambling, we ran into a man who had been sent us by the company to lead us in,

and who eventually helped us to find it. By good luck we all arrived without any bones broken by our tumbles among the boulders, and, as there was no room for the platoon in the line the company was holding, we posted a sentry, collected the water-bottles, and, getting into a little hollow, went to sleep.

Just before dawn I took a little stroll, by way of having a look round our new quarters, and was surprised on my return to feel the prick of a bayonet. It was one of my own men who had been indulging a similar curiosity and hoped he had captured a sniper. My language aroused the platoon, who stood to arms.

When the sun came up we began a stormy sorting of the water-bottles. Alas! there were not enough to go round all four platoons, and some of the ones that were present were almost empty. I myself was rather surprised to see any left at all, in view of the hurried manner of their filling at headquarters and the endless, unholy scramble we had had to bring them back in the dark across the wilderness. There were those, however, of my fellow-subalterns who were reluctant to share my opinion on the subject. Anyhow, we agreed to divide the remaining bottles equally among the

platoons and never to get water in the same way again. But this arrangement meant, of course, that some men had water while others had none. For my own platoon it seemed best to pool all the water in some large empty biscuit tins, buried in the earth for coolness' sake, in the neighbourhood of my so-called dug-out, and to divide it among the men at certain definite periods of the day. Thus a compulsory economy of water was inflicted upon the very thirsty that must have been extremely irritating. On the other hand, they could be more sure of having a little left to mitigate their thirst at an advanced period of the day. The water-bottles were to be stacked at the same place, to be regarded as the property of the community and not of individuals, and to be filled by a fatigue party whenever opportunity was presented to replenish the biscuit tins. Meanwhile any derelict water-bottles, of casualties or fools, that might be found lying about were to be deposited there too; then, when there were enough bottles to go round, and the habit of husbanding the water had been instilled, they would again become the property of the individuals; which is what eventually happened. These details are dull and childish to read now

but were at the time a matter of life and death.

As remarked before, there was no room in the front line for my platoon, so we went in reserve into a tiny gully a hundred yards behind, scooping out shelters in the side of the gully. The nature of the ground and the absence of proper digging implements (we had "entrenching tools," of course, on our equipment) made trenches and dug-outs impossible. The soil was a light shale and sand that split and crumbled indefinitely, leaving a jagged surface most uncomfortable to the recumbent figure. As yet there were no sticks for props, nor any tin nor planks, shovels or picks. Still, there were several stones for parapets and walls, and after a while we were fairly sniper-proof.

There appeared to be a Turkish trench along a spur, running down to the sea, parallel to our own, a little farther along the ridge we occupied. But the scrub was very thick just there and I could not see. It may have been merely a line of snipers: presumably the rest of the company, in the front trench, knew all about it.

In the sea below us, on our immediate left (my company was about half-way between the sea and the summit of the ridge,

and had a company on either side of it), lay a torpedo-boat destroyer. I have never felt so great an affection for a boat as I did then for that one. She used to signal news to us (and rumours); she signalled warnings of the doings of the Turks in our immediate front, and at the slightest hint she would steam slowly round, show her back teeth to the Turks, and let off a few rounds at various snipers' strongholds on the hill. But she had even more sterling qualities than this. All night long she fixed her searchlights on the ground between us and the Turks, whom she shelled devotedly at any sign of restlessness on their part. Last, but not least, she *gave us water to drink*, for the whole battalion, rowing it ashore in a little boat and pumping it thence into a sail-bath on the beach; so that, though we were still parched with thirst, this gift staved off disaster; and when the men went down to the beach to carry it up to us there was usually a cigarette, a pipeful of tobacco, once even an old newspaper, to be had from one or other of the sailors. The only newspaper that I saw in Gallipoli contained an account of the Welsh coal strike—"100,000 Men Idle" ran across the top of the leading page! Many of my men were coal miners themselves, and it was lucky for

that idle 100,000 that many thousand miles
of water (salt, alas ! not drinkable) separated
them. I wondered what would happen when
they met again—those that were left of
them.

CHAPTER VI

“ TRENCHES ”

THE first day in these amateur trenches seemed even hotter than usual. Perhaps this was due to the complete absence of shade. In the morning a party was sent back for our rations. It was a very long and rough way that they had to go in the burning heat. The path was hardly worthy of the name, and the expedition was a long time on the way.

The rations had to be carried on the men's backs in large packing-cases, and it seemed a pity that a nation which produces khaki Bibles did not subdue the glaring white of these boxes with the same forethought.

On this particular day, however, none of the ration-carriers was hit, though when at last they came staggering down with them at midday some of them doubtless wished they had been. I remember one poor fellow falling down unconscious by my dug-out. He could not swallow any water that might have revived him, the inside of his mouth and throat being too swollen to admit a drop, but after sundry operations with broken ration

biscuits there was just room enough to coax a little water down, and after a while he came to. The rest of the party were almost as bad. I believe it was due to our inability to eat enough of the salt beef to keep really strong.

The parties who went down to the nearer beach on our immediate left were better off. They could wallow in drinking water from the sail-bath and have a delicious bathe in the sea, besides the chance of a cigarette. Unfortunately, the size of these parties had to be strictly limited, and it was some days before we all could get a bathe. Another drawback was that one was liable to be hit by a sniper while bathing, though, considering the number of men who did bathe and the good it did them, such casualties were rare enough to be negligible.

On the evening of this day someone dropped an ash in the scrub. In half a second yards of scrub were alight, tearing headlong up the hill among the stunted oak and veitch. Luckily we managed to put out the fire by emptying sandbags broadcast in its path; otherwise in a few minutes our whole position would have been most uncomfortable, and we should have been left half-burnt, without a vestige of cover to conceal our movements from the hidden Turks.

I retired, with grimy hands and smarting eyes, to my dug-out, to meditate upon the strange mutability of human affairs, wherein the course of a campaign may be altered by the dropping of an ash.

And the thought of ashes carried my mind by a simple transition to smoking. I had got two little tins of ship's tobacco, but my pipe I had left in England. Who does not know the annoyance of visiting a friend after dinner of a summer evening, and finding that he has forgotten to bring his pipe? Let him imagine what it was like sitting on a ridge in Gallipoli, watching the sun go down into a crimson sea, when the heat of the day is passing and the mosquitoes are abroad—without a pipe! On this particular day I felt the loss so keenly that I manufactured a pipe out of a branch of a local shrub—a kind of Portuguese laurel with a rosy, coral-coloured bark, using a roll of paper for the stem. It was a great success, when smoked upside down to improve the draught; indeed, it tasted so sweet that I resolved, after the war, to buy a few acres of that ridge in Suvla and, setting up a pipe factory, to make my fortune. I went to rest content.

Next day was much the same, except that I went down to the beach and had a bathe.

The pleasure of taking off one's clothes for the first time for seven days was enormous ; but the delight of the bathe itself quite indescribable. I swam a great deal underwater, being perhaps a trifle over-timorous of the wily snipers on the cliff.

The climb up from the beach made me almost as hot as before I had bathed, and I was puffing and blowing when I reached the company commander's lair, where we were to meet for tea. It could not rightly be called a dug-out, funk-hole, or anything but a lair. He had chosen a place where several bushes, larger than the rest, grew together by the side of a little dried-up watercourse. The bushes were of the species of Portuguese laurel out of which I had made my pipe, and among these did our company commander make his lair, preferring cover from sun to cover from fire.

That afternoon, as he crawled out from among the shady bushes on all fours, with a reddish bristly beard (water was far too scarce to waste by shaving), to greet his subalterns, he looked like some forest denizen being discovered by a party of explorers.

There was just room for us to creep inside the lair, and we discussed a tin of sardines that had cropped up miraculously from

headquarters, some jam and many ration biscuits, also tea.

Our company commander's pleasure at this sumptuous meal was somewhat marred by a brooding terror, that made him announce at last that he would have to leave his dug-out. By way of explanation he pointed to the floor in the corner. There, in about nine pieces, lay the remains of a scaly vermilion monster, which he described as having been, when alive, a huge and ferocious centipede, with which he had been battling since mid-day. The thought of our gallant captain's lonely and terrible struggle with this horrible creature reduced us all to a state of speechlessness.

That evening I was sent with the platoon to battalion headquarters, on the crest of the ridge, to support the machine gun section. The gun itself was in a sandbag emplacement, where there had been a few casualties from the snipers, who were very active on the other side of the ridge. We had to be on the sky-line, along the razor-like edge of the hill that dropped down steeply on each side. The ground was too rocky for trenches, so we lay behind a line of stones and boulders on the edge of the ridge at night, with bayonets fixed, the sentries being

obliged to lie down for once, owing to our peculiar position. The idea was, in case of an attack, to charge down, without shooting, at the advancing enemy.

When darkness came I lay looking over the edge of the hill, with my head between two stones, into the valley and over the plain and the salt lake to the hills beyond. I was facing about south, but a little to the east.

It was a remarkable scene. Once more could I see the sulphurous flashes of the warships' guns, and hear the roll of musketry fire, rising out of the gloom from the plain five or six hundred feet below. In the centre of the plain there was a blaze of light. Three enormous fires were raging in the bush a mile or two away, over the ground where our troops had advanced. Huge semicircles of flame were creeping down the valley towards the sea. Fortunately, they were too far away to let us hear the cries of the wounded they were swallowing alive, and it was not for a day or two that I heard the details of the tragedy.

There was a certain gloomy vastness, a certain remoteness, about the scene spreading out below me all that night. The sights and sounds of battle were faint and confused, but I knew that beneath my eyes, between

the crest on which I lay and the dim crest, where shells were bursting, away to the south-east, two armies were contending for the mastery of the Dardanelles—two armies of which both were in all probability in the last stages of exhaustion, and fighting on to a standstill. Every conceivable form of valour and endurance, death and mutilation, was existing at that moment down beneath. And yet it seemed to me as remote as if I had been Zeus, reclining on Olympus, and watching the Greeks and Trojans battling on the plains of Troy.

Suddenly I heard a slight noise on the boulder to my right, where I had put a dozen of those little round ration biscuits to nibble in the night. I could see them faintly gleaming in the darkness. To my surprise there were only half a dozen left. I lay and watched. After a few seconds there was a little rustle and a small animal appeared, dark and furry, on the boulder, standing out against the sky. It seized a biscuit in its front paws, looked round, and leapt away. It was like a miniature kangaroo. I think it was a jerboa.

The expected attack did not take place that night. Expected attacks never do.

Next day water was scarce, but we were

getting more used to privation. But, if my own platoon was hard up in this respect, the platoon on my immediate left was in a worse plight still. It was pathetic to see its subaltern doling out his supply to his men for their breakfast. He was measuring it out in an iron ration tin—a third of the tinful for each man, amounting, I suppose, to about three and a-half tablespoonfuls. A tin was being held to catch the drops that fell as the water was poured from one tin into the other. Later on in the day, however, we got a little from the beach, which was now twice as far away, and a little red and green water was sent up from headquarters, with orders to boil before drinking. I believe this precaution saved us a lot of dysentery, though it was on that day that I began to feel prostrated with dysentery myself.

The day lacked interest. We felt very useless and unenterprising where we were. We heard that in the plain our line had been compelled to withdraw a little way. Apparently the great bush fires had something to do with it.

We had a few more casualties from snipers, and the adjutant got a gash from a rifle bullet in the forehead, but this did not prevent him being as busy as ever. He seemed to do

everybody's work, yet never to interfere with anyone.

After another day and night in this position we heard we were to be relieved. I was very glad, for dysentery and wakefulness were making me feel tired. I rejoined the company with my platoon, and eventually we were relieved by the remains of two battalions that had seen hard fighting in the plain. It was in the company of these regiments that I had spent the voyage eastward, and I looked out for friends among the long line of men that filed past us along the path. They were all gone but one.

We found that our withdrawal from this advanced position was only for a few hundred yards, where we relieved another battalion "entrenched" along the top of the same ridge a little farther back. Here we spent a long time in burying their bully-beef tins and other refuse, and in advancing their line of defence, so that we could see over, and hold, the actual crest of the ridge. At this point a few picks and shovels came along, and, with the help of these and a few loose stones, we made a fair barricade along the razor-edge. But rumours of a coming bombardment, accentuated by the presence of a couple of Taube aeroplanes, made it necessary to be

dug in properly—an impossibility, just there, without regular quarrying tools, the picks quickly becoming shapeless. However, one or two crowbars appeared suddenly from nowhere, and the work of entrenching went on slowly but satisfactorily, increasing our thirst to an incredible extent as the dust got into our throats.

After a while I went along to the doctor's dug-out to get some anti-dysentery pills, and found that he had gone sick himself the day before. But his substitute gave me various mixtures to swallow, and told me to report my progress at intervals. There was a delightful view over the bay from the doctor's dug-out, reminiscent of the view from King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel, as far as the land and the colour of the sea were concerned. The lovely island of Samothrace loomed large on the horizon : it might have been the Isle of Skye, from its shape and colour. Between Suvla and Samothrace lay innumerable ships. I never longed so much for the life of a sailor as then. There was something so comfortable and serene about the way those ships were lying on the waveless blue sea, and I knew that on most of them a bottle of beer would be obtainable for sixpence.

I returned slowly to the company mess,

where our captain had taken up his abode. It consisted of a flat platform of sand and rocks built out from the steep slope of the hillside. An ingenious arrangement of ropes and strings, designed and executed by a subaltern, who had lately been running a trans-continental railroad through the virgin forests and hills of Canada, and who had acquired the knack of making himself and his neighbours comfortable in any surroundings, supported a canopy of leafy branches that shaded all of us. This company officers' mess did not profess to be shell-proof, but it was certainly inhabitable. The kitchen, consisting of our servants and their mess tins, a pile of bully-beef tins, our water-bottles, and a bag of biscuits, lay in a little hollow close at hand, and was quite efficient as far as it went.

After lunch I repaired to my own "scoop-out" on the crest, and discussed the relative merits of macadam and wood paving for London streets with my platoon sergeant, who, since his retirement from the Regular Army, had been O.C. road-menders in a metropolitan borough. The conversation drifted to dysentery (on which topic I spoke feelingly), dead Turks and the regiments to our right and left. Also, no N.C.O. of ours

could refrain from making a punning, but laudatory, allusion to the name of our adjutant. When this joke had been duly launched, the conversation returned to a topic that was seldom absent from our minds—a pint of good old English beer, and sleep was the natural consequence. But, alas! I was soon aroused by orders to make a chart of the trenches of the half battalion in my vicinity, which took me some time and much pondering over a prismatic compass.

Next day was remarkable for the arrival of our “first reinforcements” from the Isle of Lemnos. The number of my platoon was swelled to 63, and the obvious delight of the reinforcements at being in such a beautiful place (compared with Lemnos) and at meeting their friends once more bucked us all up and made us feel that it wasn’t such a bad place after all. It was as though a ration of champagne had been issued to all ranks.

Good fortunes never come singly. In the train of the first reinforcements came our first mail for five long weeks. Then even dysentery lost its horrors. I got three letters and 50 cigarettes! Six illustrated papers arrived for the company, and an old newspaper that told of Lloyd George’s triumph over the Welsh patriots. Moreover, a box from Fort-

num & Mason arrived, full of good things, for the mess.

We ate herrings in tomato sauce for supper, and took up our posts for the night refreshed in body and mind ; but the advancing strides of dysentery and an enterprising sniper (luckily a contemptible shot) took a mean and continuous advantage of my indisposition.

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CHAPTER VII

BATTLE

WHEN morning at last came, the morning of August 15th, a Sunday, I crawled to the doctor again for more pills. He said I would have to retire for a rest to the beach next day, unless matters suddenly improved. In the meantime he gave me a gigantic pill. While I was pessimistically contemplating the immense bulk and unprepossessing colour of the pill, a fellow-subaltern limped in with one boot off. The sole of his foot and the underneath of his toes were full of thorns, which he begged the doctor to remove, explaining that while bathing the evening before he had accidentally trodden on a spiked sea-urchin whose pink and purple prickles had run in and broken off. After half an hour with the tweezers most of them were extracted, and together we went back along the path up to the crest. I swallowed the pill, after many experimental gulps, on the way back.

On our return to the company mess we found that the box of food had brought forth

a big fruit cake, which the captain was hewing into Homeric slices, as befitting hungry men.

We had hardly begun to devour them, however, when a message came from headquarters to get ready to move at noon ; and the captain hurried off for details, while we went to get the platoons ship-shape, collect the digging tools and issue some water.

On his return the captain told us that the division was about to launch an attack upon a certain line, to straighten out our Z-like position, supported by a Territorial division on the right and the torpedo-boat destroyer on the left. Our own particular part in the proceedings was left rather vague.

I was all for finishing the cake before we embarked upon anything rash, but was overruled ; so the box was packed up again and sent back for safe keeping to the quartermaster.

In a few minutes all was ready for the move. Two ammunition boxes of water were to be carried behind each platoon (we had seen the result of the lack of it a few days before). The canvas bandoliers were slung on, chin-straps drawn down to keep the helmets on, etc. I secured a casualty's rifle and bayonet, and made a brief exhortation

to the section commanders. It would have been much longer, but was unfortunately cut short by orders to lead on my platoon, down back along the little path past the battalion headquarters and the doctor's little dug-out.

A mountain battery passed us on the path, or rather we got off the path to let it by. It was very ornamental with its mules and turbaned drivers ; and I am told that it did excellent work that day.

We filed down into the hollow just by the lower arm of our Z, past " B " company's trenches, where I had just time for a few hurried " Good mornings." A little mountain gun appeared on their trench's parapet, jumping about as it went off, kicking up clouds of sand and a great noise.

We crossed their trench and advanced into the low scrub to a little hollow where the company commander was waiting for us. Just as I was jumping across the trench one of the gunner officers advised me to take off my collar and tie if I wanted to return, so as to be more like the men ; so I unfastened them as we went on, and put them in my pocket.

The company commander told me that the Turks were entrenched straight ahead

of us. "A" and "D" companies formed the front attacking line—"A" company on the slope of the hill and "D" company carrying down the line into the valley. Two of our ("D") company platoons had gone on already. I was to deploy mine at once and advance in support.

There was no time for the elaboration of details. We came under fire as we deployed. In front of us was a gradual downward slope for about 250 yards, and then a long, flat, open space which rose to a large spur some 800 yards ahead. This presumably was the Turkish position. To our left, rising up above us fairly steeply, and continuing all the way, was the ridge we had just been holding. We were advancing now parallel to it, along its foot. The ground was covered with low scrub, and here and there an open patch of sand or withered grass.

My platoon deployed on either side of me, and we began our advance, stumbling over the rough ground. As we proceeded it became impossible to keep a perfect line. Now and then a clump of bush or a hollow in the ground hid the men from their neighbours. Some places were so exposed that it was necessary to race across them at full speed,

others so thorny and rocky as to be almost impassable. So that it can easily be understood how important each man's own initiative and perseverance was. Orders by word of mouth were, of course, impossible in the din of the guns and the bursting shells, the incessant and voluminous roar of rifle fire and the whole orchestra of bullets and ricochets and shell splinters that streamed past us or danced at our feet. Orders by signal were equally and utterly futile, seeing that one could rarely be visible to more than four of one's men at once. So that for all intents and purposes each man was his own master as never before in his military existence; and of all the men whom I could see that day none could have been better led than they were by their own good sense and sense of duty.

In view of the nature of the ground, the tactics of the enemy and their complete invisibility, a steady and continuous advance seemed best. The bullets from rifles and machine guns were descending in a curtain over the ground that we were covering, the sand was dancing up about our feet, dust and smoke were leaping up in little clouds, shrapnel was bursting overhead, and a great deal of small shell was falling innocuously

enough, but with a terrifying trumpeting, in every direction.

To lie down seemed as dangerous as to walk on, and certainly less useful; for we could see no Turks to shoot, even had we no friends in our immediate front, whose line we were to strengthen, and who, to judge their casualties by our own, would badly need that reinforcement.

To the left front, where the ground rose and the scrub grew thin, I could just make out the long line of "A" company's advance, and, looking back, "B" and "C" companies just deployed and coming down the slope behind us. Straight ahead I could see no troops at all.

Suddenly a broad patch opened out before us, covered with shrivelled grass that shone white in the sun. There were half a dozen of my men close by me and we raced across it for dear life.

The presence of bullets is far more obvious when they kick up the dust on a broad, open patch like that; for my own part, I longed to be the other side of it, especially as we had to pass a most unsavoury spectacle on the way—two dead soldiers, an Englishman and a Turk, lying alone together in the grilling sun. They must have been lying there thus for

many days, and their blackened faces were in hideous contrast with the bright new khaki drill and helmet. Two snipers, I suppose, or scouts.

A cloud of gaudy flies buzzed up as we ran past, and I thought that nothing mattered so long as I did not fall just there. At length we reached the farther side, where the ground became once more uneven and covered with scrub, rising a little.

Then, on the right, a few yards off, I saw the edge of the platoon we were to support, lying extended in a firing position, and decided to prolong their line to the left, rather than thicken their present one, seeing that there was a gap to be filled and the enemy's fire was coming thick and fast.

I looked round to see if the rest of my platoon on the left were coming up. They had not got the open patch to cross, and consequently could not come up so fast as we.

Suddenly I was hit in the right shoulder and knocked over: the blood poured like a fountain down my sleeve. One of the men rushed up and helped me off with my equipment and jacket. I thought the brachial artery was hit and felt exhausted. As a matter of fact it cannot have been, but my arm was broken. I sent the man on to join

the firing line, and looked at my wrist watch : the time was a quarter to two. We had been three-quarters of an hour in action.

Just then I saw one of my men staggering about with a frantic expression in his eyes. The two canvas bandoliers, full of ammunition, slung round his body were ablaze, and he was wrestling to get them off. He disappeared.

I did not notice much more until I felt a wallop on the side of the head, and my helmet rolled off. "A piece of shell," I thought, "and probably in my brain." Blood ran over my face, and I began to wonder how on earth a man could tell whether he had been killed or not. At length I decided that I was alive, and picking up my helmet made an examination. There were two neat little holes in it, such as are made by rifle bullets. At this point I realised that I was lying upon a little eminence, from which, in view of the ceaseless sighing and caterwauling of bullets past my head, I judged it prudent to descend.

My arm, which was entirely bereft of feeling and seemed to be unattached, I hitched into my braces, and eventually was on my feet. I started to descend the eminence. Hardly had I gone ten yards down when I

felt a terrific crash on the left hip. "That," I thought, "must be an entire shell," as I was knocked down into a clump of blue teasel. I put my left hand down to examine the damage, and pulled a bundle of letters, now covered with blood, from my trouser pocket. A neat hole pierced them, of exactly the shape and size of a rifle bullet travelling sideways.

A wild panic and desire to escape from bullets seized me. I managed to get on to my feet, or rather foot, once more and to proceed for a few paces. Then faintness overcame me and I fell again.

When recovered I looked at the time, but found the watch was broken. With my left hand I managed to erect a little pile of small stones between my head and the Turks, and began to take stock of the situation.

It was now, presumably, about two o'clock. The sun would be uncomfortably hot till seven or eight. It might be dark by nine: until it was dark there was no hope of stretcher-bearers. They would not be allowed up during the incessant fire. There were, then, at least seven hours to wait.

With my free hand I took off my puttees at my leisure and bound them round my head. This would serve as bandage, turban and

pillow. Next came the ampule of iodine, which I broke and poured into my shoulder through the torn shirt. It seemed to attract the flies, who came, green- and blue-bottles, in dozens to the feast. I began to stink horribly in the sun. I lay listening.

Rifle bullets and streams of machine gun fire poured over me, but I was just in cover, I think, from these. Now and then a shell would burst a little nearer than the rest, and one once fell almost at my feet, covered me with sand, but failed to explode. I watched it carefully for some time in case there had been a mistake in timing the fuse; but it never burst.

Once a few puffs of blue smoke and the scent of burning thyme drifted into my nostrils. The scene of the burning plain flashed into my mind. I turned my head to watch. The tiny flames in the wild thyme met a little patch of sand and died away: there was luckily no wind that day.

Thirst was the greatest hardship. It may interest those whose relations are wounded to know that broken limbs and a cracked head do not hurt till hospital. Those interested in "The Angels at Mons" may be glad to hear that there were angels at Suvla Bay—mere mirages coming to thirsty, wounded men: the

forms of dainty nurses tripping through the scrub, among the bullets, with neat red-crossed aprons, carrying bowls of nectar to assuage our thirst.

I saw few real people while lying in that place. Occasionally a straggler would come and ask where such and such a company was, and I would send him on ahead. At length, at dusk, not far off, I heard the shouts and screams of a bayonet charge confusedly above me, and a little later the rattle of entrenching tools. The fire died down. I heard a little rustle in the bush behind me. It was the water-carriers. A real boy with real water came and knelt beside me, giving me drink and talking to me, and putting a haversack for my pillow.

After a while I sent him off, because I was stinking so vilely, telling him to let someone know where I was in case the wounded could be moved that night. My shoulder was by this time full of maggots.

Though there was no other wounded man in sight, the whole valley was resounding with that ghastly cry, "Stretcher-bearers! Stretcher-bearers!" and awful curses. All day when the din of firing sank a little I had heard it. It went on all night until the dawn. The valley was full of groaning. No stret-

cher-bearers came : there were not enough, and they were not allowed. I began to give up hope of leaving the spot where I lay, being sure that another day's sun would be too much ; besides, it was really No Man's Land, and had been under fire for a week by day. I turned over and lay on my face in the sand.

I was aroused by footsteps near by, and the most welcome sound of a fellow-subaltern's voice, together with that of the company commander and the sergeant-major.

They put me in the bottom of a blanket, eight of them, and carried me back in the dark, over the rough ground, to a little hollow where were a wounded subaltern and a wounded major and many other wounded.

Just before dawn they moved us farther back again, this time in a waterproof sheet. Here, at dawn, the doctor gave me two pills of morphia, and the subaltern something much more welcome—a little brandy in a flask.

CHAPTER VIII

WOUNDED

THERE we lay in a row, thinking the day would never come, till suddenly we were aware that the sun was up, and as hot as ever, once again. I missed my helmet very badly now, but, after those terrible hours of chill before the dawn, the sun's heat was most welcome ; so I got a man to take the towel from my chest and wind it turban-wise about my head. The hours went on and still no stretchers came.

At about this time I must have made some particularly gloomy remark, for the wounded major next me on the right began to argue. "Nonsense ! Nonsense ! What ? Nonsense ! What ? Why, we'll soon be in a hospital ship and off to Alexandria ! Eh ? What ? Perfect palaces, those ships ! Perfect palaces ! What ? Yes ! What ? Beautiful nurses ! What ? Perfect Paradise ! What ? Drinks ! Eh ? What ? Whisky and soda ! What ?" And indeed, besides amusing us, his words were magical ; for up a stretcher came as he was speaking and stretcher-bearers all com-

plete ! We had begun to think there were none left in Suvla, and the sight of them was worth twice as much to me as morphia. Quickly they lifted up the major and carried him away.

As soon as he was gone the other wounded subaltern and I began discussing the part the major had played in "the show" the day before. We had both met him in the thick of it—buttons, badges and leggings gleaming out like heliographs in the sun, map-case swinging, straps and buckles in the utmost state of refulgence, the sand dancing with bullets round his dazzling boots—as he stood bolt upright on a little knoll with his field glasses fixed firmly at his eyes, complaining with bitterness and indignation that those "ruffian Turks" were "turning out half-naked to meet the —— Fusiliers !"

So we talked on, while the noise of firing, which had never quite left off, grew louder and louder. We could hear the big shells whistling over us, and the sound of the firing and the bursting of them far beyond, apparently upon the beach where we should go, if we were lucky enough to get so far on the way to the hospital ships. We doubted if we would, for it was now long since we had been hit, and a wounded man is naturally

despondent if he cannot walk, when there are none to carry him. We began to hear a whimpering here and there among the stunted oaks about us; and the cries for "stretcher-bearers!" that had ceased, from despair, I suppose, at dawn, broke out again monotonously, in piteous, almost angry, voices. Strangely enough, though all were very thirsty now that the sun was hot, I never heard a single shout for water, nor had I heard it all the night before. Safety was all we wanted, and that is the plain truth, for wounded men are apt to forget their unimportance in the battlefield.

At length back came the stretcher and I was lifted off the oil-sheet on to it—an awkward job when a leg and an arm on opposite sides of the body are broken. The bearers picked their burden up and started off on the long journey to the beach. A man went on ahead to pick out the smoothest way; yet even then there were countless places where boulders had to be climbed down, where the prickly bushes joined across the tiny track, where bodies lay, or where stray shells had obliterated the path. Some places, too, where patches under shrapnel fire had better be avoided—and so on. The journey was a long one and a slow. For me it was tiring and

terrifying enough, but for the bearers—men of the 31st Field Ambulance—a splendid unit which certainly deserved the official recognition of its gallantry that it afterwards received—for them it must have been worse still, carrying a dead-weight of twelve stone for nearly two miles under an intermittent fire in the hot sun. Yet they rarely put me down to rest their arms—only, in fact, when they felt the stretcher handles slipping from their cramped, perspiring hands.

We had travelled in this way for about a mile, when I heard a familiar voice inquiring if it was I upon the stretcher, and, looking up, I saw one of my sergeants walking along beside us. The forefinger and a part of the palm of his right hand had been shot off the day before, and his face was a deathly grey. His forehead was covered with sweat and he could scarcely walk. He began to chaff me about my towel “turban,” “Was I a Turkish prisoner?” and so on. Then he bent down and whispered (for hospital orderlies and stretcher-bearers are not permitted, thanks to the Hague Convention, to listen to such things), “I’ve got your revolver, sir!” and he tapped a bulging pocket with his uninjured hand. “Thanks very much,” I said. “I must have left it in the field yester-

day." His face fell. "Why," he said, "you promised it to me if you were killed." So I told him he could keep it; and then, "I'll just go off and see if I can find your valise," he said, and disappeared into the scrub again.

Soon after he had gone some tents came into view, with the Union Jack and Red Cross flag hanging over them. They were standing just above the little beach, where lately (it seemed years ago) we had landed in the middle of the night and found a stained tarpaulin for a hospital. Yes, certainly the sight of those white tents was good. But between them and us were some of our biggest guns, concealed with branches and sandbags, which we should have to pass. The roar and vibration of their firing did not alleviate our distress; nor did the answering shells that came tumbling round us from the Turkish artillery in search of them.

As we came down closer to the guns and the shells that were trying to destroy them the bearers set me down upon the path and went a few yards off for a brief council of war. After a moment they returned, took up the stretcher, adjusted the straps, and without a word set off at a fast but steady march, never stopping or hesitating for a moment until we reached the tents, right past

the battery. There were many similar little parties to ours that morning along that very path, and some of them were not so fortunate.

The tents, beds and floor space were too full to admit another "case": so I was laid outside among rows and rows of others, in the sun, waiting our turn. Every time a gun of the battery near by opened fire an involuntary groan rose up from the stretchers, and the same, of course, when a shell fell close. One of the tents was hit. The heat was very nearly unendurable, and the stench of wounds and the swarms of flies quite indescribable.

At length a doctor came along my row. It was easy to see how utterly exhausted he was, with days and nights of ceaseless work among impossible conditions. He hardly spoke at all. When he reached me he wrote something on a label and tied it to a button-hole in my shirt.

After some while I was moved on again—a few yards only this time—to the beach. Here every foot of space between the tideless sea and the low cliffs was covered with laden stretchers. Being midday there was no shade—nothing but flies and stretchers, with here and there an orderly with cigarettes. After a minute or two a space was found for me,

and my bearers went away again to get another load, but not before they had found me one of the conventional cigarettes and lit it. And it is conventional, though none the less true, to say that no cigarette ever tasted better than did that "Gold Flake" then.

The time we spent upon that beach in the eye of the sun was long—and seemed longer. But I had one or two visitors. One of them was a Roman Catholic chaplain, who had been asked by the wounded major mentioned above to hasten my embarkation into a hospital ship. He got me carried on to the pontoon pier, which made me feel very favoured, and much more likely to get away from Suvla Bay. On this pier I found myself lying next to the colonel of another Irish regiment, who had a bullet in his foot, and was consequently swearing at everyone, from General to R.A.M.C. orderly, for sending him away from his battalion just because he'd got a blank scratch on his blank toe.

Another visitor was my servant, who, though he also was suffering with a bullet in his foot, had been hobbling about, this way and that, to find me, having heard that I was in a worse case than I really was. With him came the sergeant, who had gone off to find my valise, followed by a man carrying the

valise itself, and then we all "waited on the jetty for the first boat leaving for home."

It was not long before a string of little boats was towed alongside by a pinnace, and we were carried on to one of them. The stretchers were laid in rows on the "decks," which consisted of planks laid sideways across the boats (which were ordinary row-boats).

The loading up of these boats took a considerable time, but the occasional splashes of water from stray bullets and shells prevented the operations from becoming monotonous, while our innate confidence in the Navy made us feel really safe at last.

Eventually we put off from the jetty, and soon the crowded, stinking, grilling beach of Suvla Bay was falling away behind us, and from our prone position we could see the sides of ships gliding majestically past us, and now and then the golden puffs of smoke from their guns against the blue of the dead-calm sea and sky.

The air was cooler and fresher here, upon the water, and the sun seemed kindly after all. We felt we were not forgotten any more—and with this feeling came a pang of pity for the poor unwounded devils still sweating and thirsting and struggling in the hell we were leaving behind.

Soon we slowed down, and a great white, green-lined wall, with rows of windows by the hundred, loomed ahead. A gurgle of water from the turn of the rudder, a shout or two, the splash of a rope, and an almost imperceptible bump, and there we were, made fast to a hospital ship, the major's "perfect Paradise" !

From the extempore deck of the tiny rowing boats the view looking up the sides of the great ship was certainly very cheering. Her cool-looking, white wall, with the olive-green band and huge Red Crosses, was fringed with smiling faces. We could see nothing of their owners at that angle—only their elbows and their smiles. These were the "walking cases"—men slightly wounded in the arm or head, for the most part.

Immediately above us was a busy little electric crane, whose crate was running up and down incessantly, with its burden of "stretcher cases" ; while at the stern of the next boat to us the gangway slanted up from the water, packed with more walking cases going aboard, stumbling, hopping, limping, bleeding, leaning on each other's arms and necks, and one or two on all fours. Everyone who could possibly move a yard without being carried insisted on embarking by the gangway ; and I expected every moment

that the colonel lying next me with a bullet in his foot would burst with fury at not being allowed to follow suit.

There is, however, something very amusing about being hauled on board, like baggage from the quayside, by a crane, though I heard of a case where two of the handles of a staff captain's stretcher slipped, about 30 feet above the water, and he had to hold on by his feet (his arms being wounded) like grim death for the rest of the journey up and inboard. By the time he reached "terra firma," or rather the deck, he was almost incoherent with rage; but the Medical Staff gathered that he was demanding to be sent back that instant to Suvla Bay, where, at any rate, he would not be drowned!

My own journey in the "lift" was pleasant enough, and made one feel one was saying good-bye to war; for we knew that the Turks would never dream of shelling the Red Cross flag on purpose, and we were too far out from land to be within the reach of the stray shells that made the hospital tents ashore so uncomfortable. Last, but by no means least, we knew that there would be "medical comforts" aboard, in the shape not merely of bandages but in all probability of brandies and soda too.

CHAPTER IX

THE WAY TO LEMNOS

ONCE on board I was carried down a narrow corridor on the top deck level, and even through the smell of my wounds there penetrated that indescribable but unmistakable aroma of first-class accommodation. It may have something to do with the prodigious amount of fresh white paint and varnish, or it may be the smell of recent soap and water, but it is always there.

They took me to a small room containing about eight cots, all of which were already occupied except one. There was a slight hitch about lifting me from the stretcher on to the cot, because when they raised me the stretcher came up too, being glued to the remnants of my uniform by the blood which had been drying rapidly in the sun upon the beach. At last, however, the task was done and I was snug in bed.

After a while a corporal of the R.A.M.C. came and cut my uniform off, and I told him to chuck it overboard, together with my shattered and stained wrist watch, which

looked unlikely ever to work again. I was partially washed and temporarily bandaged. It was a great relief getting my limbs tied up after so many hours. The corporal further obtained for me a glass of *iced lemonade* !

Feeling now both safe and moderately comfortable, I began to survey my fellow-passengers. On my right I could see a subaltern friend of mine lying on his back, but he was sadly altered. He seemed thinner and smaller and very pale. I called to him, but he did not answer. I supposed my voice could not be strong enough. He was staring at me. At length I got an orderly to speak to him for me ; but on returning to my cot he told me that it was Lieutenant Something or other ; at any rate, not the boy I was thinking of at all.

On the other side of me, in front, was a major. Poor man, he was wounded badly in the head and mad. I could not see the others from my cot, and no one was speaking, except an unconscious man in the corner.

After an hour or two the matron arrived, with an armful of Red Cross bags, for keeping odds and ends, and packets of chocolate. If those who had subscribed those presents to the Red Cross Fund had seen the

joy, almost reverential, with which they were received in our stuffy little ward they would—well, they would subscribe again, double! True, the chocolate was almost liquid and a trifle sour; but still it was divine. It was the fault of the climate that it had lost its pristine freshness.

Soon after this a doctor came and felt my pulse. This appeared to cause him small satisfaction, so he listened to my heart, which was going splendidly and cheered him up. He said he would have liked to “operate on my arm,” but there were so many absolutely vital cases on board, and so small a staff to deal with them, that he would be obliged to leave me for the doctors on shore when we landed. I wonder how many men owe the preservation of their arms and legs to the fact that there are not enough doctors to cut them all off when casualties are evacuated by the thousand!

The next incident of any importance after this doctor's brief visit was a meal—without exception the very nastiest that I have ever had. From my prone position I was unable to see it on the plate, but the orderly shovelled it into my mouth. It must have been buttered eggs, completely stone cold, clammy and greasy. However, the good corporal

enabled me to wash it away with a glass of soda-water.

It must by this time have been about six o'clock in the evening, and the ward was intolerably stuffy. Once a chaplain came in and began to talk to the major, apparently not noticing that he was mad. They talked together about some Turkish coins which the major had got in his pocket; but after a little while the major became unable to talk at all, so the chaplain came across to my cot. I asked him whether there was anyone else of my regiment on board, but he did not know. I found out next day that he had just buried one of them. Indeed, every now and then the hospital ship slowed down, stopped, and buried her dead. We could see them carried along in Union Jacks.

When the chaplain had gone, the sun began to get low in the sky, and this seemed a suitable time to attempt to get a little sleep. But just as the sun was sinking into the sea an appalling noise arose. All the coloured labour on board seemed to gather on the little piece of deck outside our ward, and "sing"! I suppose it is one of the peculiar glories of the British Empire that all its subjects, temporary or permanent, shall be allowed to perform their various

religious devotions without let or hindrance ; but we certainly wished that evening that some of them could be gagged. The “ singing ” of our coloured crew was horrible. It consisted of an interminable psalm—with at least eighty spasms—chanted on one particularly piercing note : it temporarily unhinged me, and we said good-bye to sleep.

Not long after this musical “ turn ” the ship’s engines started, and we were on the move, and after another considerable period, during which the motions of the boat were most unpleasant, we came to a stop once more and learnt that we had reached the Isle of Imbros.

There we waited at anchor until dawn, when we were told to steam away again, as there was no room for us in Imbros : so off we went once more, into a roughish sea, and came to the Island of Lemnos, to Mudros Harbour, where we got orders to disembark.

The disembarkation of the wounded began at about 5 o’clock that afternoon, while the sun was still hot. Our ward was one of the last to be evacuated. For hours we listened to the tramp of stretcher-bearers on the deck, and the monotonous rattle of the electric crane lifting the stretchers up and down.

At length two sailors came into the ward

with a stretcher, into which I rolled, and they put my valise under my head for a pillow. They laid me down on deck just under the bridge, and proceeded to give me a cigarette. Strangely enough, they were men from the battleship, lying in the harbour, in which my brother had served his first commission a year or two before, and directly above me on the bridge I saw one of her sub-lieutenants directing the operations of disembarkation ; so with him, between his bouts of swearing like an admiral, I carried on a conversation, learning what his ship had been doing since the outbreak of war. She seemed to have had an interesting time in the Dardanelles.

Meanwhile the sun was setting and the darkness came down fast. The great electric light over the crane was turned on to facilitate the work of unloading the ship. The little group of bluejacket stretcher-bearers, the doctor standing in his shirt sleeves looking on with arms akimbo, the pale-faced bundles of the wounded, and the bustling movements of the crane, looked very weird in that bright beam of light, and I began to wonder whether my arm would ever regain the power of movement, to allow me to make one day a sketch of the strange scene. I wish Brangwyn had been there. One by one

the stretchers disappeared into the blue darkness over the ship's side, and at length I was the next to go.

In a moment I found myself once more on the rough deck of a wobbling rowing boat, with a little midshipman in charge—a most fatherly boy, who gave me an Egyptian cigarette out of an exquisite silver case, and eventually took the tiller and gave orders to cast off from the hospital ship.

Once more, but in the cool of night this time instead of the burning midday sun, I heard the delicious gurgle of small waves under the bows of our little boat and the even panting of the pinnace that was towing us. We ran in and out among big, shadowy ships towards a bright light, which drew close rapidly, and the midshipman brought us in alongside a floating jetty without a bump.

Instantly I heard the padding of bare feet on the deck, and two tall Indians took my stretcher up and carried me along the pier. But my broken limbs were making me restless, and the Indians were a trifle rough; so I made use of a few words of Hindustani that I had picked up years before from Anglo-Indian relatives—remarks that brought an explanatory torrent from my bearers, that I was utterly unable to understand.

CHAPTER X

LEMNOS HOSPITAL

Concerning Lemnos Hospital.

For forty weary days I lay
In a hospital tent at Lemnos Bay,
And I longed for the things I could not get—
Some books, some beer and a cigarette.

In London now, with plenty of each,
I long for a glimpse of Lemnos' beach,
And the forty happy days I spent
With fifteen friends in a hospital tent.

At the end of the pier they hoisted me into a motor ambulance, laying me on one of the top shelves. There were four of us in it now, and an orderly to look after us on the way. He was a wounded Lowlander, in a semi-convalescent state—quite a child. Two Australians were up in front driving.

One of my companions in the car was a subaltern of my own regiment, whom I was very glad to see again. The same with a second ; but the third was the major with the wounded head. He seemed very excited.

Soon the engines started with a rattle that made us swear, and then the car started off upon its journey. Road there appeared to

be none. Huge pits and hillocks and heavy sand, which the driver could not see distinctly in the darkness, seemed to mark the path. The Lowlander, with legs and arms outstretched, tried to keep us from tumbling off the sides of the stretchers as for more than a mile we rolled and jerked and jumped and rattled on—the most unpleasant journey, I should hope, that I shall ever make.

The major was in a terrible state of exhilaration. “Faster! faster!” he kept crying out to the driver; “faster! faster! Can’t you go any faster?” But, luckily for the rest of us, the driver took his own way in his own time.

At last the car came to a standstill, and we could make out the forms of innumerable tents. Two huge Australians, clad in shorts alone, lifted me, as if I had been a feather, from the ambulance, and strode down to one of the tents.

There was a curious hush about the camp. Everyone seemed to be talking in gruff whispers, as though afraid of being overheard. All about there was a subdued bustle, and the muffled sound of footsteps moving in sand.

My bearers stooped and went in under the

doorway of a small marquee. Inside there was an uncertain light given out by an electric lamp tied up to one of the tent poles. The tent was yellow lined, but black with flies asleep. Eight or nine camp beds were ranged along each side, most of them full, and everyone was talking softly to each other.

They rested my stretcher against the bed nearest to the doorway, and two more orderlies came up. The four of them lifted me on to the sheets and the stretcher-bearers went away. I was bleeding again now, and the maggots were very active, stirred up, I suppose, by their recent jolting journey in the motor ambulance.

One of the new orderlies was oldish, with a heavy black moustache; the other was very young-looking and fair. They asked me about my wounds and said that a doctor would be coming soon. They spoke with a slow colonial drawl, and at length the elder leant down and whispered confidentially into my unbandaged ear, "Would you like a brandy and soda? It's the last one left in camp." It may have been very greedy of me, but I accepted with alacrity, and soon he brought me a tin mug, with a little brandy and soda in the bottom of it.

I promised not to tell "the others" about

my good luck, and then the orderlies went off to a table in the corner, whereon were many tin mugs and bowls and plates and a "Primus" stove burning.

The older orderly, who was evidently in charge of our ward, then made a speech. "Would any of you gentlemen like a little cocoa? We can't give you anything else to-night. But the stomach cases mustn't have anything at all."

There was a chorus of assent, and the cocoa was soon prepared and distributed in the tin mugs by Ralph, the younger orderly.

We had scarcely finished this most welcome meal, when the doctor came in—a major of the Australian Medical Corps—and made a hurried examination of our wounds in the dim light. We had all been tied up in the hospital ship, but my bandages had become detached during the journey in the motor ambulance, so they were now tied up afresh. I gave the doctor the message from the ship's surgeon about operating on my arm, but he told me I must wait until next day, as there was no time for any but the most vital operations to be done that night.

My new bandages were very warm, being made of a thick flannel, not altogether desirable in such a hot climate. No splints

were put on my arm or leg. To begin with, there was a shortage of splints; and, secondly, neither my arm nor my leg was supposed to be broken. Indeed, I did not see how we could discover their true state, seeing that they were swollen to a surprising size and no bones at all could be felt through the swelling. I was not taken to the X-ray room (we called it the "Picture Palace," being next to the "Theatre") for a month; but it made no difference, because the bones set themselves, and the splinters stuck on to them in a most satisfactory way, though, of course, the dressings, etc., would have been far less uncomfortable with splints.

The shortage of bandages, too, was tiresome. "Orderly, have those bandages come back from the wash yet?" used often to be the doctor's question when he came round the ward of a morning. For, as our old orderly—"Bob" we will call him—explained, the hospital was staffed for about 400 men and had to take in 1,100 on that single night when we arrived. The failure at Suvla Bay not only disappointed politicians, but it meant an unexpected torrent of casualties, that swamped the hospital ships and hospitals most cruelly. In France, of course, such sudden strains can be adjusted in a day or

two. It takes a month or two to deal with unanticipated and unprecedented demands for feeding, doctoring, nursing and evacuating tens of thousands on what is practically a desert island; where food won't keep; where water is worth gold; in conditions unfit for women to nurse; and itself thousands of miles from home.

Soon after the doctor had departed a corporal came round with a supply of morphia and a syringe. He squirted some morphia into my fore-arm, but no effect was noticeable. Gradually we stopped what talking we had been doing and either went to sleep or tried to do so. Bob stayed in the ward. He said he always stayed in the ward all night when fresh cases arrived. He couldn't leave it to the night orderly, who, owing to the shortage of the staff, was usually a convalescent Tommy, as often as not suffering from dysentery, and generally too ill to keep awake. At least, so I found while I was there. So on this particular night Bob stayed in the tent, and I was very glad that he did so, for my bandages were too tight, and he knew how to readjust them—which he did, at the same time removing a number of maggots.

I thought that night would never end.

The darkness seemed eternal. But at last a faint glimmer of light arose, and through the tent door, at the foot of my bed, it was possible to make out something of the place to which we had been brought in the darkness.

The whole country was composed of a reddish-yellow sand, utterly devoid of vegetation, which borrowed its general tint from any variety of light that there might be at the time. This morning it was a bluish-grey, deepening into a dark violet where the land sloped down to the sea, about two hundred yards away. The sea was a gigantic natural harbour, crammed with ships of every colour, shape and size; and beyond the harbour rose the high, encircling mountains, tipped with vermilion, this moment, where the rising sun was lighting up the hill-tops. Bob told me that one of them, a tiny point mauve rather than vermilion, was Mount Athos in Greece. And, indeed, in such a climate one might well see so far.

The possibility of watching all the shipping in this great bay was most welcome for a pastime. There was constantly some ship or other moving in and out. There were warships of several nations—the low, thick battleships of France, a five-funnelled

Russian cruiser, British battleships and British cruisers, and innumerable Allied ships of smaller size, from monitors and mine-layers down to submarines and hydroplanes. Between them ran an everlasting stream of picket boats and signals—flash signals at first, but, as the sun rose, semaphore and flags.

Besides these warships were forests of transports, carrying troops, guns, mules, food, coal and munitions of all kinds; and, most picturesque of all, perhaps, the swarms of small Greek sailing boats, which clung like parasites to the sides of the larger ships.

There was, too, an incessant stream of hospital ships; some steaming in from Gallipoli with their cargoes of wounded men, some steaming out to fetch another load, and many recently arrived lying at anchor while they were unloaded, or taking in a new supply of coal.

In the background, but towering over every ship in the harbour, I recognised that first morning the huge four-funnelled bulk of the *Mauretania*, which had recently arrived, I heard, with a brigade and a half of infantry on board, making the voyage out from England in under six days! Enough to make any Hun submarine's mouth water for a year!

As the sun rose up, innumerable ships, hitherto concealed in the heavy violet haze, stood sharply out in their own colours against a deep blue sea. Just then, in the French camp, which ran along to our left and front, between the Australian camp and the harbour, I heard the reiterated calls of our Allies' "réveillé," and shortly afterwards a party of French soldier-carpenters came up to the fence that divided the two camps just in front of our tent door. Short and stout, with huge pith helmets, crimson trousers and blue cummerbunds, they stood there in the sun, conducting a heated argument with many gestures, expletives, and pointings to the ground, the fence, the sea, the sky, the tents, and the island in general. After about an hour the palaver ceased, and they disappeared for a few minutes, to return with loads of timber and tools, with which for the rest of the day, in a perfect silence only broken by the gurgle of wine in thirsty throats, they ran up the neatest little wooden hut that you could wish to see.

The French camp provided endless diversions. There was a jetty running out from it into the harbour, upon which a gang of Turkish prisoners, clad in a blue-grey uniform reminiscent of Huns, were working all day

long at the unloading of stores. Huge stacks of empty sandbags as big as houses, and absolute mountains of hay and ammunition, were being erected everywhere, amid the greatest bustle, the creaking of countless primitive Greek carts, and the shouting of orders. The troops employed about their camp—an immense collection of shining tents spreading right round an inlet of the huge harbour—were of several colours and nationalities, bearing many different uniforms; and, besides the troops, were French bluejackets and naval officers, resplendent in the white and gold of their summer uniform.

To our right, and behind us, were the tents of the Australian hospital, all full and overflowing, the floors being occupied, in many cases, where the beds had run short. To the right, a little below us, were the isolation tents, full of men suffering from enteric, etc. The whole of the ground, or rather sand, between the tents was crawling with flies, just waking up for their day's enjoyment and for our day's aggravation.

Here and there the bronzed Australian orderlies, in their usual charming deficiency of clothing, were fetching and carrying medical stores among the tents. A few were

fixing up a small bell-tent, quite close to our marquee, to contain some poor fellow who for various reasons could not be kept any longer among the rest in his own ward. Two men, with an iron wheelbarrow, were collecting large stones and placing them in patterns by the doors of tents. They also brought a pile into our tent, for propping up the legs of the camp beds, because the tent was pitched upon a slope and the wounded were slipping, mattresses and all, off the beds on to the floor, which consisted of a sandy sailcloth laid upon the sand.

Down the hill, and away to the right, two stretcher-bearing parties were moving off towards the cemetery.

That was all that I could see through the tent door, but it was certainly novel and varied enough a scene to distract me somewhat from my own surroundings and the pain. Altogether, I felt that I was immensely fortunate to be there, seeing that I was now upon a bed on terra firma, and would be able, probably, to get sufficient "drinkle" to prevent my suffering any more from thirst. There seemed, too, every prospect of my nerves enjoying a complete and badly needed rest; whereas in hospitals at home in England, I had heard, were visitors, hospital

nurses, gramophones, telephone messages, thermometers and charts, not to mention bottles of medicine and many other torments for the severely wounded! Besides, in London the whole ward would have been woken up by now and made to wash before breakfast, while in Lemnos basins, orderlies and water were much too scarce for such red-tape, being procurable only by an insistence which amounted almost to rudeness in the eyes of our dear old orderly, and to surliness, grouching, or sheer bad form in the eyes of one's fellow-patients; and the same with the making of the beds. Washing and bed-making, therefore, became events as rare and as pleasant in this peaceful hospital as circumstances could possibly make them.

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CHAPTER XI

THE DAILY ROUND

AT about six o'clock, when the sun was now well up, so that we could see each other clearly, a certain liveliness arose in the tent. Those who had been waiting for their neighbours to awake became aware that their neighbours had been waiting for signs of wakefulness from them—signs which consisted, every morning, in beating away the flies that left the black masses on the tent walls for our faces. It became a proverb, therefore, "The early fly gathers the sleeping face."

Being in the corner I had only one neighbour, a fellow-subaltern of my regiment, the one who had been my companion in the motor ambulance. Needless to say, we had any amount to say to each other. After mutual congratulations, we began to go over the list of our officers and tell each other what we knew of their fate. It appeared that out of the twenty-three of us who had gone into the action two were left safe and sound, eight had been killed, and the rest wounded. We

discussed the action from every point of view—strategical, tactical, personal and civilian. We learnt from each other how our friends had fallen, and where each one was hit—how one of our captains, already wounded, had given his life in an attempt to save his wounded servant; how gallantly our colonel fell; how splendidly the men had all behaved; what we thought would happen in the end; and how long it would take to get astride the Dardanelles.

I heard from him at that time, too (in future let me call him “George”), a little tale that seems worth while repeating here. He was being carried on a stretcher down to the beach, on the morning after the battle, with his right arm shattered to bits. Just as the little party was getting near the shore an officer’s servant, an old Irishman, a veteran with ribands running right across his breast, who had seen him growing up from childhood at home in Ireland, ran up crying to the stretcher and kissing him went back along the path up to the trenches of his regiment. And indeed it is a most heartrending sight for an old soldier to see his regiment cut to pieces seemingly in vain.

So we talked on: of how we saw our general dancing with excitement on the

parapet of the front-line trenches, as we were leaving them for the assault; how many guns had been supporting our advance—and how few; whether our long, hard year of training had been quite necessary for so few wild hours of action; and a thousand other details connected with the last few days.

Meanwhile from the farther end of the tent came two "Good morning! They told me you were killed!" 's—and there I saw two more of our subalterns, one of whom, with a vilely shattered thigh, was the pluckiest, cheeriest fellow of the lot, though Heaven knows how he managed it, seeing that a splendid and devoted twin-brother had been shot in that same fight. The other had a broken shoulder and arm, and carried (in fact, still carries, I believe) a part of the brass regimental title in his shoulder joint, knocked in by the bullet that had broken it.

Seeing so many of us wide awake, Bob opened a huge basket, which he had hitherto been using as a wash-hand stand, that stood near the wooden table in his corner, and produced from its capacious interior a number of fly whisks, made of palm-leaves fixed upon a stick; these he distributed round the ward. Fortunately, every one of us, I think, had one arm or other left with which to wage

war against the elusive but ever-present flies.

The brief glimpse we had been able to catch of the interior of Bob's basket made us clamour for a more intimate knowledge of its contents ; but Bob refused to depart so far from the daily programme, upon which he was now evidently about to embark ; for at that moment Ralph, the younger orderly, came in and was sent to get the bucket full of drinking water, while Bob busied himself about the "Primus" stove—an elaborate job, because there were only two "prickers" left in the camp, and these were always being borrowed by vagrant orderlies from the other wards. At last, however, the "Primus" was induced to burn, and Ralph, returning with the water, put it on to boil, and went off for some rations. He came back with a bowlful of eggs, some tea, a tiny tin of Bovril, a tin of condensed milk and some bread. Then, on the table, the orderlies made breakfast. The bread was cut up into large slices and spread with jam, produced from a box under the table—"plum and apple," of course. Naturally enough, butter was unobtainable.

While the jam sandwiches were being made Bob was "testing" the eggs—tiny little yellow things that came from Athens or

Alexandria—an operation that consisted of dropping them into hot water and seeing whether they exploded or not (if it exploded on contact with the water an egg was considered to be a bad one).

Finally, when all the eggs had been dropped in the water and only two or three had been found wanting, when all the sandwiches had been cut and jammed, and all the flies in the tent had settled on them, the cook-house bugle blew, and Ralph set off with a bucket and basin, to return in ten minutes with the bucket full of steaming porridge and the basin full of—no! surely our eyes were playing us false!—the old, familiar, twelve-ounce, crimson little tins of bully-beef! “The frozen meat has run out to-day,” said Ralph apologetically; “there’s not a pound of it in the harbour.”

The porridge, though extremely liquid, was very good to drink, and was all I could manage that first morning, though some of the hardier ate all they could lay their hands on.

Now this was our typical, indeed unvarying, breakfast, except that the bully-beef was changed after a week or so for frozen meat, and that towards the end of my stay in Lemnos the porridge ran out altogether.

Those of us who were "milk diets" got bread, porridge and tea, but not meat or jam. "Chicken diets" had the bully-beef until such times (about a fortnight later) as some tinned chicken came sailing into the harbour. "Ordinarys" had everything.

When we had all finished breakfast, Bob went away to get some well-earned sleep, and Frank washed up the breakfast things in a small tin basin on the table. The refuse was thrown into a large tub by the door, much to the delight of the flies. When the bowls and mugs were cleaned, the sweeping of the ward began. This was done with a large stable broom that effectually lifted all but a negligible quantity of the sand from the sailcloth floor on to our beds, whose coverlets (white, at first, with a large Red Cross in the centre) quickly enough became a reddish-brown: so did the sheets, so did the blankets, and so did we ourselves. But it was a rule that the ward should be swept before the doctor came round in the morning.

Soon afterwards Bob returned, saying that he had had a bathe in the sea, but had found it impossible to sleep. He then began to compile one of his famous "Requisition" forms. He pulled a little slip of paper and a pencil out of the jam box, and, sitting down

at the "kitchen" table, asked if there was anything in the world we wanted.

A chorus of demands broke out: "A pair of pyjamas," "A towel," "A tooth-brush," "A cigarette," "A razor," "A shaving brush," "Soap," "A bottle of Bass," "A boat to England," "A nurse," "A gramophone," "The *Times*," "A pipe," "A pair of slippers," "A dressing-gown"—and innumerable other requirements were hurled at him.

"Well, I'd better see what I've got in my basket first," he said, rising, "before I fill up this Requisition form. But I don't suppose you'll be able to get any of *those* things"—and he opened the basket.

First of all came out some weird and wonderful pyjamas—odd suits of coloured cotton print and chintz (I trust, fair readers, that these are the right words: I mean the stuff you see on drawing-room chairs)—which he distributed as far as they would go. Being nearest to the basket, I was able to get the first pick, and chose a coat with a pattern of red roses on a black ground, and trousers of crimson check with bunches of lilac laid over them in diamonds. Only one dressing-gown appeared, and that one must have been a captured Hun's cavalry cloak

from the look of it. This one gown was to do for all of us. There were four pairs of slippers, that were divided to suit individual requirements; for instance, I shared one pair with an ex-architect who had a wound in the right leg, while mine was in the left.

There was plenty of tooth-powder (Japanese, in wooden boxes) and almost enough tooth-brushes, as well as a tiny towel each. "There isn't a razor obtainable in the island," said Bob, "but there's a Greek barber lives up at the Windmill at the top of the camp, and I daresay he'd come down and shave you if you asked him."

So we sent a message up to the barber to come down and shave us. Ralph came back from the errand with a grin all over his face. "He says he can't leave his tent, the dirty old thief," he explained, "because last time he came to shave a gentleman here some of our boys made off with all his kit—razors, soap, brushes and all. Serve him jolly well right, too. I *hate* these oily Greeks."

So we had arrived at an impasse—seeing that we could not go to the barber and the barber dared not come to us. So Bob wrote down razors on his Requisition form, as I suppose he had done every morning for many months, knowing he would never get them.

And then the doctor came in and dressed our wounds. When he came to my bed he told me I was very lucky, as no operation would now be necessary on my arm, as Bob and I had strafed so large a percentage of its population the night before. So he squirted in some stuff to wake up the rest of them, and tied it up, and then my leg and head.

We were not supposed to look at our own wounds, so had to make arrangements with our neighbours to describe their appearance to each other, when the doctor was gone, telling them the probable length of time their wounds would keep them out of the war. I gave George six months' grace and he gave me five. We all gave the fellow with the shattered thigh one year. And there was a man, in the next bed to his, with a badly broken shin, to whom we gave the same time. These two were the most interesting surgical cases within range of my bed; but there was another one up in the far corner, whom I could hear but not see, who appeared to have at least five holes in him, one of which was through the jaw. He was a Cambridge don, and evidently quite unaccustomed to keeping his mouth shut; so he would talk unceasingly all day, through

the clenched remnants of his teeth, and far into the night, for continual toothache kept him awake, and he had a great weakness for ghost stories, which he used to tell with the greatest imaginable effect in his present circumstances.

The doctor was unable to give us any news, but Bob volunteered to go out and get some. He was a confirmed optimist, and, as we found out later, could never leave the tent for longer than half an hour without coming back with some delightful rumour. So when he returned from his search for news on this first morning we got the full blast of his optimism straight away. "One of the men off one of the battleships," he began, "is offering five to one on the Navy being through the Dardanelles in ten days. And he says one of his officers says that Achi Baba's fallen."

But we had heard the Achi Baba news too often before, and I fear that the silence greeting his news must have offended Bob. However, he persevered: "And they say the Turks are suing for a separate peace." This we were more inclined to believe, as we had given them a nasty fright at Suvla Bay; and, strangely enough, at that very moment we heard the unmistakable sound of cheers,

round upon round of cheers, as from a great multitude of men, floating over the water ; and, looking out of the tent door, I saw a fleet of transports steaming out of the harbour, crammed from bows to stern, and half-way up the masts, with troops in khaki drill, who were waving their helmets and cheering as they glided out past each of the men-of-war, whose crews were cheering back ; and then, as they were nearing the mouth of the harbour, a fresh cheer, of thinner volume, reached us from the distance, and we saw a huge white hospital ship passing the transports on her way in, the "walking cases" crowding the decks to see the cheerful army setting out to avenge their wounds. Yes, perhaps the Turks *would* sue for a separate peace, if there were many more such liner-loads of men to follow ; and there were many of us who still believed that one more bayonet would break the Pasha's back.

It was certainly very cheering to see those fresh troops setting out for Suvla Bay, for we knew that our casualties there had been prodigious during the last ten days, and that without reinforcements success was unattainable. And surely by now the water supply would be running smoothly, the rations going up like clockwork ; our men

would by now be able to reply to the Turkish bombs with British bombs, instead of with stones and lumps of earth; a few guns had been landed, and the shells must be accumulating. By now the ships must have the exact range of the Turkish trenches and batteries and entanglements. And the Turks must be worn out with the continuous heavy fighting of the last fortnight. Yes, with a new Army Corps we should, as the sailors were wagering so readily, have European Turkey quickly in our hands.

Soon after the last cheers had died away, when the troopships were already dots in the blue distance, our orderlies got busy on the "Primus" stove, to make tea for our lunch—or, rather, midday dinner. But, try as they would, the "Primus" would not burn. "It must be that blooming kerosene!" said Bob. (He really *did* say "blooming," and nothing worse, although he had been spending twenty minutes on the stubborn stove in vain. For both he and Ralph were non-swearers, non-drinkers and non-smokers—the very opposite to the foolish idea of Colonial troops which the small but inevitable number of bad-hats among their large and gallant contingent had managed to earn for them in Egypt.) "Yes, it must be that

blooming kerosene. It gets worse and worse every day. Which bottle did you get it out of, Ralph?" "Why, the one in the jam box," answered Ralph, and, pulling it forth, he took out the cork and smelt the inch or two of liquid remaining in the bottom of the bottle.

A huge grin spread across his face, and he handed the bottle to Bob. "My word! You *are* the limit!" said Bob. "That's the last drop of lime-juice we've got. We won't be able to get any more for a week," and he emptied the stove's tank into the sand outside the tent.

Such little scenes were always taking place in our little tent, and did much to amuse us.

Dinner was much like breakfast, consisting of bully-beef, bread, tea and a liquid which we called "white-wash," but was really ground rice, sweetened by tins of gooseberries or pine-apple chunks, these latter luxuries being provided by the Red Cross Society. And once again I should like the subscribers to that fund to realise how great was the pleasure, out of all proportion to the expenditure, that their gifts gave to all of us who were wounded in Gallipoli.

Being an "Ordinary" I could have as much to eat as I desired, and the sight of the

pine-apple chunks restored my appetite, which had been worse than negligible for the last three days, into the hunger of a starved wild beast. We all ate prodigiously. And who will now dare to say that cold bully-beef is unsuitable food for the severely wounded ?

After dinner came that all-pervading silence that comes of excessive meals in an excessively hot climate, within an excessively stuffy tent. But only one or two of us were able to sleep. With the flies and the bandages and the heat and the impossibility of moving off one's back, sleep was hard to induce. So I got one of the orderlies to write a short letter for me to an aunt in Alexandria, who would cable the news of my safety home to England, and would send me cigarettes and things to read. Alexandria was only two days' sail from Lemnos, and boats were passing to and fro incessantly. But during all the five long weeks that I was there, not a letter nor a cable nor a parcel came through to me from home, from Egypt or from Suvla Bay ; nor did anyone else in my ward receive one except an Australian officer and the orderlies. For the mails came regularly enough from Australia, because it was so much farther away than England, I suppose. However, in November

I received a cable sent off from home in August; so perhaps if I live long enough I'll get an answer to that letter I sent to Egypt.

But, of course, when we first came to Lemnos we did not know how regular the postal deliveries were; so were constantly longing for and even expecting a mail. So that great was the joy, on that first afternoon, when a man came into the tent with his arms full of letters, saying, "Well, here's a nice lot of letters for you, gentlemen!" and threw them down in a pile on the table; but, alas! they were unposted letters, to be censored, and we, being officers, were ordained the censors of them—the letters of all the sick and wounded in the camp.

There were only about half a dozen of us that afternoon who were well enough to read them through, and only about two who could write. My arm being still nerveless, I made no attempt to do so, and was contemplating another more prolonged and more determined effort to go to sleep, when a Greek voice broke in upon our ears, and a Greek strolled into the tent, with a huge bundle of the *Times*. They were of a date three weeks old or so, and cost fourpence each. But one or two of the least badly wounded still had a little money with them, and distributed

copies of the paper to all the rest of us. I read every word of that *Times*—all about mail-carts and false teeth and “Generals wanting places” (we could have added one or two), and things I’d never dreamed of before. But he *was* a scoundrel, that Greek ! He came in solemnly every afternoon, with his stale fourpenny papers ; and we found out that the papers only came out to him once a week. So that we always got a paper six days staler than we need have had, so that he could make two shillings a week extra on each of us ! Still, it gave us *something* to read. The parts about the theatres and music halls made us very home-sick, and we were green with envy at some little bits of news, such as “rain fell heavily in London yesterday,” or “a party of wounded soldiers were entertained yesterday at the Empire, and afterwards taken to tea at ”—somewhere or other that sounded very nice, or “a hospital ship arrived at Plymouth yesterday from the Near East.”

After what seemed an age (we lived entirely for our meals) came tea—eggs, jam sandwiches and arrowroot, with cocoa. We ate about half a loaf each, and I should not like to say how many flies !

The doctor came round once more towards

dusk to dress the worst few cases and to be asked for news. But he was Scottish and very cautious, and we could get nothing out of him. So we regarded as oracular every word that fell from his lips—much as one used to do the infinitesimal communiqués that came, at first, so sparingly from our armies in France.

He did tell us, however, that evening that we should be sent on to England or to Egypt as soon as practicable; whereupon we asked him which of us would be considered as qualifying for home. But we could get no information out of him on this point.

When the doctor had gone Ralph went off to have a bathe (how we envied him!) and Bob waxed conversational. He first of all congratulated us on all being wounded. "I don't mind looking after men when they are wounded," he drawled; "but it's the sick I don't like so much. Why, last winter this tent was full of pneumonias—every bed! And there was a storm of wind and rain going on for two months without stopping. The tents came down on top of them altogether, once or twice in the night, and the whole camp had to turn up and fix them up again. They were a dratted nuisance, I can tell you. Very bad some of them; but

very few of them died. Then, of course, I had measles and small-pox and typhus to look after. But the small-pox was the worst of the lot. Simply awful! But only a few of *them* died, too. Of course, the whole island gets green in the winter, as soon as the rain comes along"—which reminded him of the climate of Australia, upon which he expatiated in the most glowing terms, telling of apples and peaches as big as footballs; of sheep and wool and corn and gold; of men landing in Australia with twenty pounds and having twenty thousand in five years—in fact, a huge river of praise for that new country that made our mouths water. And soon Ralph came back, and we told him we had been hearing fairy tales about Bob's native land. "Oh! *Bob* comes from a desert compared with Melbourne," he said at once, and then described his own particular country in even more mellifluous terms.

After that we used to listen to them for hours every day explaining the wonders of Australia, and the need they had of Englishmen to develop it, instead of those blasted Germans and the yellow races. They promised to "show us round" for a year or two "after the war," and "fix us up." They

said that practically every Anzac in the contingent had made two or three pals among their comrades from the Mother Country, and arranged "to show them round after the war." And certainly it seems to me that nothing could be better for this Empire than if all these arrangements shall be carried out. The Australians certainly appeared to all of us to be a splendid lot of men : a brave, generous, large-hearted and patriotic race, and, above all things, as open and straightforward as the day.

The historical, economical, geographical and botanical survey of Australasia was cut short this evening by the entry of the night orderly, a tall man, who came in limping, and whose first words betrayed him as a Lancashireman. After receiving a few brief instructions from Bob, such as which of us were to have morphia injections, the peculiarities of the "Primus" stove, and where to find the deck chair to sit in, he took over his charge, and Bob and Ralph retired.

The sun was getting low, and once more the little electric globe was lit and screened, at our request, by a towel fastened round it with safety pins.

And then we heard a sound that reminded us of England, for most of us had not heard

it since the days in camp at Basingstoke—the officers' mess bugle call. And we heard the doctors walking into the mess tent, which was just out of sight behind us. A little while afterwards we saw a tempting sight—a little *roast turkey* on a huge dish being carried past us into the mess ! We cheered it loudly as the triumphant cook marched past.

Then the Cambridge don settled down to the telling of ghost stories through his broken jaws, and those of us who could dropped one by one to sleep.

So ended our first day in the hospital tent at Mudros, in the Island of Lemnos.

CHAPTER XII

QUIET

PERHAPS the most monotonous time of our life in hospital was the night-time. For hours we would try to fall asleep, longing to be able to curl up on our sides and snore, as a Christian should. Later, a corporal would come in with a hypodermic squirt and inject morphia, which made but little difference. And then, perhaps, we would at last get to sleep, by beginning to count the flies on the tent roof or by watching the local Praying Mantis running to and fro about his meal. (I think that is his right name. He is a long, beetly creature, who kneels up and looks at the slumbering flies, and then, after selecting a good fat one, pops down and eats it.)

Eventually we would wake up again and find we had been asleep for about ten minutes, and that what we had thought was the dawn was really the rising of the moon. One would then watch the gloomy vastness of the harbour, with its ghostly sentinels, and try to read the flash-light signals that

were twinkling all the time from mast to mast ; or see another hospital ship moving silently into the bay, with its green row of lights and its Red Crosses. Perhaps, too, some dim form would rise up out of bed and crawl laboriously to the foot of it, and sit down motionless by the hour, staring out into the night through the tent door. And all night long, in that curious island, we could hear the crowing of a cock in the distance, and, though I am not superstitious, I expect he was generally correct. And then, at last, seemingly long before the dawn, bugle call after bugle call down the French lines ; then the fading of the moonlight ; the faint lighting up of the hills with the returning sun ; the Australian *réveillé* call ; a whisper, here and there, in our own tent ; the shout of a wounded man awakening from a nightmare ; the yawns and stretchings of the convalescent night orderly ; the turning out of the sickly electric light ; and then the waking of the first few flies and the entry of Ralph, fresh, smiling and cheery as the risen sun. The night was over.

Ralph was certainly a most remarkable person. He had lived for the greater part of his short life in the bush, taking up many occupations in turn, but always, apparently,

had been a self-educated, self-appointed missionary among the very tough nuts who sometimes find their way eventually into the huge wildernesses of Australia. He had a passion for good literature and was, at the time of our stay in Lemnos, learning Tennyson's "In Memoriam" by heart, having just finished Cromer's weighty volume on Egypt, which he lent me to read. It was a great pleasure to get hold of a solid book once more, for, with the exception of one or two Australian newspapers and the *Times*, there was nothing at all to read in the hospital.

So in the afternoons, as soon as our lunch was over and the clatter of the cleaning of the mugs had died away, I used to read a few pages of Cromer's *Egypt*, to the accompaniment of chunks of Athenian chocolate, very gritty, that was obtainable up at the Windmill, and even, occasionally, with a cigarette; for every Thursday there was an issue of a species of Gold Flake cigarettes all round the hospital, and these, though worse than any I had seen before, were inestimably better than none at all. One day, moreover, the men of the Fleet sent ashore an immense quantity of tobacco and cigarette papers as a present for distribution among the wounded.

I think it was on that same day that we

received a memorable visit from a Commission sent out from England for the purpose of investigating the cause and cure of the dysentery that was making such havoc among all ranks in the Near East. Covered with red tabs and hat-bands, and loaded with glittering brass, they strutted down our ward—patently disgusted at the contrast it presented to the hospitals to which they were accustomed—and so out, and round the rest of the camp, a silent and somewhat critical cortege. Next morning we asked the doctor how the Commission was getting on. His answer to our innocent questions was a trifle curt, but one could detect the symptoms of a smile about his face as he replied, "It's all in bed with dysentery to-day."

The treatment for dysentery, as practised on one or two of us in the ward, appeared to consist of almost absolute starvation, with a quantity of injections, of some kind, into the blood. We were told that when, after a fortnight or so, the patient became practically transparent with hunger he would qualify for a bottle of champagne. But not one of the fellows in our ward managed to maintain the necessary symptoms for long enough to attain to this desirable standard, so we never heard the pleasing pop nor saw

a single cork fly up to the roof among the flies, nor any tin mug foaming with champagne.

One night, however, I was given a particularly disagreeable medicine to swallow, and a little opium was mixed with it to pacify me. Almost as soon as I had gulped it down I fell into the most delicious sleep, the first good sleep I had enjoyed since being wounded, and in the course of this opiated slumber I dined for three hours at the "Carlton," with fizz and ices and strawberries and cigars. And ever after that night I was able to sleep, in darkness or in daylight, whenever I desired. I suppose my system must have forgotten how to fall asleep, and then suddenly been reminded of it by the opium. Of course, on the next night everyone begged the doctor to be allowed to "dine at the Carlton," but he sternly refused.

The Dysentery Commission were not the only visitors that we had the pleasure of seeing in our tent, though visitors were few enough and very far between. Perhaps the visit that cheered us up most of all was on the occasion of an inspection of the hospital by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Ian Hamilton. We heard about it the evening before it happened, just after we had heard the news of

the famous attack on the Anafarta hills, that had taken place on Saturday, August 21st, and of the enormous casualties we had suffered there. The first battalion of my own regiment had suffered particularly heavily. But, as our ward was full already, we had not got any of the wounded from that fight sent to us.

The news of Sir Ian Hamilton's impending visit threw the orderlies into a great state of excitement, and early in the morning of the actual day the preparations for a reception worthy of the visitor began. Bob, particularly, was anxious to have the place looking clean. He concocted some mixture, which he called disinfectant, in an iron basin, and threw it in great splodges all over the sailcloth floor. Then, with a broom, the floor was swept at intervals for the rest of the day. At first the presence of the pools of disinfectant made the dust turn into a rich, reddish mud, but as the day wore on it became dust once more, and duly coated the coverlets of the beds. These, however, were shaken now and then, and the floor eventually resumed its *status quo*.

The next thing to be done was to arrange the jam box, and a barrel full of old socks, etc., right away under the table at the

corner of the tent. The table itself was washed, completely, twice, till the floor ran with soapsuds. The mugs and bowls were scrupulously cleaned, in two changes of water, and piled up in a pyramid at the far end of the table. The soot was scraped off the "Primus" stove, and two weedy little lemons (it was a great triumph to have procured any lemons at all) were placed in a conspicuous position on the nearer side of the table.

In addition, as though to emphasise the reckless luxury in which we were living, Bob pinned up no less than six brand-new fly-papers on the tent poles, expressing the pious hope that the flies would keep off them and leave them clean till the General had left. But we cruelly organised a combined "drive" with the fly-whisks, making it impossible for the flies to rest their weary wings on any other spot than these fly-papers. So that by the time the General *did* arrive the papers themselves were no more to be seen. At the last moment, Bob, feeling that the pyramid of mugs and dishes, though fairly clean, was not exactly pleasing to the eye, covered up the entire table (except the lemons) with a spare counterpane surmounted by a huge Red Cross.

Sir Ian Hamilton spent a long time in the ward, speaking to each of us for some minutes. He appeared to be in the best of spirits, but to feel our losses most acutely. He told us, with a laugh, as he went out, that he had got some excellent news, which he would love to tell us, but he could not even tell his Chief of Staff. Altogether, his visit cheered us up like anything. He was most sympathetic with every type of wound and sickness; indeed, there must be few of them which he himself had not experienced in the course of a military career to whose variety and extent his rows of ribbons bore ample testimony.

As soon as he had passed into the next tent Bob and Ralph stood at ease. They said they always liked Sir Ian Hamilton's inspections, as he gave all his attention to the patients and did not waste any time by peering at the plates and peeping at the dust under the beds.

The rest of us fell to wondering what the "good news" was. Had it got anything to do with the Bulgarians? Or with the Greeks? We all know better now.

Bob considered that in all probability a hundred thousand Italian troops had landed to storm the Bulair lines with a dozen

seventeen-inch guns. He had heard some of the sailors saying something about it. But when the doctor came that night he dismissed the story with an indulgent smile.

It must have been the day after the visit of the Commander-in-Chief that Bob made a memorable foraging expedition to one of the liners in the harbour. Hearing of his intention, we loaded him with commissions, asking him to buy razors, strops, prunes, melons, turkeys, coffee, tongues, ham, and innumerable other things. He came back, hot and tired, in the late evening, with about half a pound of melting butter wrapped up in a newspaper, two razors, four tins of sardines, and a tie-pin with a picture of the *Mauretania* on it: everything else had been sold out.

I managed to secure one of the razors, and Bob, with the utmost magnanimity, presented each of us with a slice of bread and butter. It was weeks and weeks since we had tasted butter, so the pleasure this feast gave us can perhaps be understood to have been enormous. What a time the Huns will have after the war!

The *Mauretania* tie-pin was destined for a friend at home in Australia, and brought in a box to one of us to censor. We censored almost as many parcels as letters in that

camp; for the Australians were always sending home their souvenirs. Often I had four or five wooden boxes, beautifully and carefully constructed, laid upon my bed for censoring, each box containing a perfect specimen of an unexploded Turkish shell—rather difficult objects to censor unless you are an expert. However, their owners could usually be persuaded that shells invariably get lost in the post, and that they had better send them by any invalided friends who might in due course be returning to Australia.

Perhaps the grimmest souvenir I have ever heard of was in an English soldier's pack, up at the hospital pack-store—namely, a Turk's skull, complete with a Fez cap!

It was now possible for me to join the happy band of censors, for though I could not yet move my right arm, except by carrying it about with my left, yet the fingers were beginning to work all right. Anyhow, censoring letters told me all the latest news from the Peninsula; and some wonderful fairy stories, too, that would have made even an English evening paper blush. If the morale of troops can be judged by the tone of the letters of its wounded, there never was a cheerier army than that which fought upon Gallipoli.

With the possibility of writing came the possibility of shaving, too ; and I found that my new razor, though of German manufacture, made excellent practice on my beard of a morning. Under the circumstances, I could only clear an inch or so of the forest at a time, with rests between, so that shaving could be made to occupy a full hour every day ; which was no small thing, seeing that there was little chance else of passing time so quickly and so profitably.

There were now four razors in the ward, which went the tour of the tent each day, Bob or Ralph doing the stropping between the rounds ; so all of us soon became quite respectable again.

It was while shaving for the first time since being wounded that I suddenly became aware of strange and wonderful noises going on somewhere outside the tent—the noise of music and singing in the distance. Now we were used to hearing, every evening, from the hospital staff's recreation tent, the eternal thumping of a piano and the endless encores of shouted choruses ; but this was in the morning, in broad daylight, when all the staff was hard at work. What could it be ? Was I dreaming ? *Could* it be—— ?
 “ There's a gramophone in this camp ! ” I

announced. We all listened. Yes ! There was undoubtedly a gramophone in the camp !

We sent out Bob to reconnoitre, with orders to locate the instrument, pounce upon it, and, if possible, to bring it back into our ward alive. He tiptoed out of the tent, and there followed a long pause, during which the indistinct sound of distant music continued. Suddenly the music stopped. Bob must have opened the attack. We awaited the result with confidence.

Our confidence was fully justified ; in less than five minutes Bob staggered in with the gramophone and an armful of records. He placed them abruptly on the table, where the medicine bottles and squirts were kept, upsetting the only bottle of ink in the ward, and, winding up the gramophone, told us that it belonged to the doctors, who had got it to lend to the hospital. *We* could have it for the whole afternoon, and each ward was to have it for half a day after that. With these words he put on "When we wind up the Watch on the Rhine." Never had a gramophone given greater pleasure. Every record was played and encored over and over again, till the doctor came in, in the evening, and had the poor tired instrument carried away to bed.

We then, after repeated and elaborate calculations, came to the conclusion that it would not be our turn to have the gramophone again for a fortnight, which suggested a suitable subject for a bet—whether we should ever hear it again or not; for we were now afraid, some of us, that we should never leave that island till we were fit for active service once again, so long had we already been there, and so many hospital ships had steamed in and out again without embarking us. As a matter of fact we did outstay the fortnight, but never heard the gramophone again, because it had been broken in some other ward. So the bets were declared off.

That gazing at the hospital ships as they came in and left again without us was very trying. Every time the familiar white-walled vessels showed their noses round the headland at the harbour's mouth we felt that our turn must have come at last. There were about a hundred and twenty such comings and goings while we were at Lemnos, and in the end we left off watching them, unless Bob brought in some "absolutely reliable" report that we were sailing for England the next day—which he did about every other evening.

Sometimes the signalling expert would announce the embarkation of so many wounded on to such and such a boat next day, and thereby raise our hopes to fever pitch, only to be dashed to the depths again as, after a long day of anxious waiting, we would see a hospital ship steam out at dusk, give a smug hoot, and disappear round the corner of the island. But most of the signals were in a cipher of which we could make no sense at all.

There was one great thing that the monotony and discomfort of the camp in Lemnos did for us—those who were going to get well at all did so with a remarkable rapidity. If one wanted something done, it was best to do it for oneself, and quickest, too. Take the shaving mentioned above as an example: it might take an hour to shave oneself, but it would have been a month before we could have lured the barber out of his lair, and the orderlies had too much else to do.

It was not long, therefore, before I invented a means of getting out of bed, in spite of the broken leg and arm. True, for the first few days of my experiments in this direction I needed at first two and then one orderly to prop me up and give me confidence, as one does when one learns to ride a bicycle; but

after that, with the help of a broom, turned into a crutch with cotton wool and bandages where the hairs had been in its palmier days, and with some bands to support the useless limbs, I found I could progress, at the rate of nearly a yard a minute, sideways, on the toe and heel of my right foot. This, of course, was a very great advantage, for it is weary work to lie for ever on one's back; and soon I found it possible to get outside the tent door and lie back for a few minutes in the deck chair, a pleasure in which I was now well enough to indulge twice a day—at dawn and at dusk, when the sun was low, and when, incidentally, the place was looking its very best and feeling its coolest.

So of an evening four or five of us would lie out in a row, on anything we could scrape together in the shape of a chair, to watch the sun go down behind Mount Athos, and listen to the bugles, all over the island and upon the ships, blowing the officers' mess, and hear the scraps of the songs of the soldiers of many nations as they strolled about to bask in the peace of that short, cool hour of dusk. It is strange how they seemed with one accord to sing at that one time of day, especially the French troops in the camp below. Sometimes we sang ourselves, generally "an-

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thems ”—i.e., everyone simultaneously with his own words and tune. And soon it would grow chilly suddenly, and we would crawl back, at our leisure, to our beds again, which, with any luck, the incoming night orderly would have made up for us.

CHAPTER XIII

OUR SPIRITS ROSE

So the days passed, gathering into weeks, and the weeks rolled by. There were but few changes in our little company. One day a captain was found to have enteric, and removed; and we lost the major who had been wounded in the head.

Just before dawn I had crept out of the tent, unable any longer to sleep, to the deck-chair that overlooked the harbour. And there, with pencil and paper, I began to make a rough sketch of the shipping in the bay; longing for a paint-box with which to catch some of the fleeting colours of the sunrise on the hills beyond, and on the sea.

But soon my arm and my head grew tired, and I fell asleep in the chair. The *réveillé* bugle woke me up, and, feeling rather cold, I looked round for my crutch, to return to the tent. And then I saw, coming out of the tent, Bob and Ralph carrying one of the beds, with the sheet drawn up to the top. They passed me without a word and went on over the brow of the hill.

When I got back to the ward the major's place was empty and everyone asleep. And,

being tired, I went to sleep myself. At breakfast that morning we learnt that the major would be buried later on in the day. We were all very sorry he had gone; for though he had forgotten how to speak—"luck" being about the only word he could remember—he had seemed always very cheerful, and was a popular member of our little mess. The gap that the removal of his bed had made seemed very empty for a while, and our thoughts would keep running back to him as does the tongue to a newly-lost tooth. Only one of us was well enough to go to his burial.

Some more of our party left us after a few days, to go to Alexandria or England—we did not know for certain which. One afternoon the major commanding the hospital had come into the ward and asked for six "walking cases" to be ready to go on board a hospital ship next day; and, as I could now "walk" the best part of ten yards, I tried to get off with this lot myself; indeed, I would have given anything to go. But, though I volunteered and the major said "Oh, yes, of course!" yet when the names of the lucky six were read out mine was not one of them. George, my neighbour, was more lucky, and I had the mortification of seeing him, next

afternoon, hobbling out of the tent with the other five (which included the Cambridge don—so we should not even have any more ghost stories to cheer us up of an evening), and of watching them climb up into the ambulance and disappear, with many wavings and farewells and promises to take back messages to our people at home.

And then their beds were filled up by Australians and New Zealanders, sick and wounded, and we settled down once more to the pessimistic belief that our turn would never come to sail home. For so rapidly were we improving and so fit were we beginning to feel after our recent condition, that we thought another month would see us back into the firing-line again—a strange mixture of optimism and pessimism, but strengthened by every fresh departure of a hospital ship, and every rumour of Bob's that came to naught, as day and night followed the last monotonous night and day. One incident especially helped us to banish all hope of going home to England for a rest.

We were surprised one afternoon by the entry of one of my fellow-subalterns, clad in complete khaki drill clothes and helmet, who came limping into the ward to ask the orderly if any of his regiment were there.

Then he saw me and came and sat upon my bed (there being no room for chairs inside the tent), and told me he was going back next day to Suvla Bay. "I can't stand the convalescent camp in this awful spot," he said, "so I've got leave to return to the regiment to-morrow. Your quarters are palatial compared with the convalescent camp. Why, we had no table there till yesterday, and we haven't got a bench there yet. There's practically nothing to eat. One has to stand in a queue in the sun and be handed out a hunk of bread and a cup of tea. For God's sake give me something to eat! I'm on 'light duty' and I've been unloading ships from morn till night the last few days. Never done so much work in my life. You *are* lucky devils in here!" —and he enviously surveyed our stuffy little fly-blown tent and hungrily eyed the jam sandwiches the orderly was putting on the table amid a swarm of flies. We gave our visitor some tea and plenty to eat, after which he limped away again, loaded with messages to the regiment. If his visit made us more contented with our present lot, it made the future, the prospect of convalescence, a gloomy one to look forward to.

George's place in the bed next mine was

filled by an Australian, with a poisoned arm and rheumatism all over him. It had started from a tiny scratch in his hand, but he had refused to leave his job, and consequently got poisoned and generally run down. Before landing at Anzac he had been in the Australian Navy, where the loss of his boat had put him out of his job; and before that he had been a ship's captain in the South Seas. A queer fellow, who had neither written nor received a letter from a soul for many years, he was yet very good company, and had many a yarn with which to while away the time.

Then there was a Staff officer in another of the vacant beds, who appeared to spend most of his time in the conduct of a spirited campaign against the local vermin, ably assisted and heartily sympathised with by Bob, who used now and then to undress completely in the ward, in the ardour of the chase after some particularly troublesome and elusive flea. Apparently the sand about the tents was full of these creatures, who used to wander inside to get out of the dew or even of the rain. For, indeed, one day we had a great storm of thunder and wind and torrents of rain, several tents being bowled over completely by its ferocity. In

a moment the whole island was transformed. Rivers ran in every direction round and through the tents, and the land assumed a thin green veil of momentary grass as the water poured over the hillside, that sprang up before our eyes like the colour running from a painter's brush. A dense fog of sand blown up by the gale hung over the harbour itself, blotting out all the ships and mingling the sea and earth and sky into one raging, drab-coloured mass. But the rain was the first we had seen for weeks, and the storm soon cleared away and the air grew cool and clear. This brief storm and these few transitory blades of grass brought in their train a flood of thoughts of England—England as it now would be, in the cool glory of autumn; and thoughts of Ireland too, and the days of training we had spent there a year ago—days of hard work followed by quiet evenings in the subalterns' room of those Dublin barracks. And yet at the time we had thought those evenings and those days so unbearably dull that we had contemplated the wildest schemes for smuggling ourselves out to France. Could we really have thought those autumn evenings dull? Why, we had had a pianola then! We had only to press a button and lo! cigarettes

and drinks would appear! We had only had to stretch out our arms and we could get the evening paper! The weather was cool enough there to need a fire! No, those evenings were not dull! But these in Lemnos? Yet, even if we went back there to the Dublin barracks at this moment, there would be too many empty armchairs by the fire in that dreary subalterns' room. Strange voices would wish us "luck" over the Scotch-and-soda. How damnable the present is! How glorious in retrospect! And so I could only repeat mechanically to myself "*Forsan et haec olim . . .*" and meanwhile reflect that there would never come a period of life so dull that we should ever truthfully consider we had been fortunate in Lemnos.

It was at about this time that an ancient man from Egypt, with a huge, grinning mouth, took over from Bob and Ralph the job of emptying the two great refuse-tubs, that stood outside the door of the tent, each morning; and as a reward he would be given a tin of plum-and-apple jam with half a loaf of bread. Whence it appeared obvious to us that, if there was jam to spare for the most menial toiler in the camp, there would be some to spare for other things; and a

great and simple scheme suggested itself to us. We got one of the orderlies to go by dusk, bearing tins of jam, into the French camp, for purposes of barter. We had a great desire to quaff a draught of the Frenchman's ration wine.

So we crawled out and sat in a row, in the gloom of the evening, outside the tent, turning towards the French camp and the harbour, and waited for our emissary's return. After a long while he came up the hill, bearing his bucket full of rich-looking purple wine, that splashed up over the side on to the thirsty sand as he walked. We dipped our tin mugs into the dark depths and drew them out, brimming over with the precious liquid, and raised them, with a cheer, to our lips. . . . One sip was enough ! It was the flattest, filthiest fluid that ever passed the lips of man. Thereafter we ceased to grudge the poor Egyptian menial his daily bribe of plum-and-apple jam.

The morning that followed the Night of the Distressful Drink was full of rumours. Bob had met a man, who had been speaking to a man, who had been visiting the *Mauretania* the day before while she was being coaled. And this man had been talking to the steward, who had heard the

quartermaster tell the purser that the *Mauretania* was leaving within three days for England with a cargo of sick and wounded, of whom four hundred were to be taken from the Australian hospitals. Moreover, the doctor himself, as he went the rounds of the ward after breakfast, openly admitted that "it was just possible that there might be something in what Bob said." Besides, the ship was obviously coaling, for we could plainly see a grimy collier tied up to her on either side. And, if one part of his tale was true, why not the rest?

Our spirits rose. We began to bet about it. Next day the colliers were still there, it is true, but Bob announced that his rumour was now a certainty, but that the sailing had been postponed for one more day; and at last, after two long days, the colliers were seen at dawn to have steamed clear of the *Mauretania*, and smoke was pouring from her funnels. When the doctor came in we asked him which of us were going. "None, as far as I know," he answered. "The *Mauretania* is returning to England empty, to be fitted up as a hospital ship. There are three submarines just outside the harbour, waiting to catch her before she gets

her Peace paint on." And, sure enough, at lunch-time the mighty ship was on the move, and by the time lunch was over she was out of sight. So there was nothing to do but say the grapes were sour; and to add, in imitation of Homer, "It is better to lie on a camp-bed in a tent on Lemnos, than in a four-poster on a torpedoed *Mauretania*."

After this we ceased to listen to Bob's prophecies, but this did not prevent their being announced two or three times a day. We began to grow quite childishly bitter and cynical as the days wore on. Everything went on as usual—the man with the badly fractured thigh paid his usual visits to the operating theatre; we ate our usual round of rations; we read the *Times* as stale as usual; as usual we were exasperated by the flies; and the man with the broken thigh would be carried back to bed, white and unconscious, and the usual heavy reek of chloroform would permeate the tent. Poor fellow! the limb was rebroken and reset again and again. There appeared not to be the necessary appliances to hold it properly in place. The surgeons did all their work under the greatest disadvantages. Sometimes, for days together, when the hot wind was blowing off the land, it was

impossible to keep the operating theatre clean, and the table itself from a continual covering of the dirty sand, which hung like a yellow fog in the air, and on such occasions any serious operation was out of the question. Tetanus, dysentery, typhoid, and even measles, were abroad; and thousands of the men who entered the hospital suffering from mere wounds alone, fell victims of one or more of these on top of them. But in spite of all these drawbacks, and of our continual disappointments, we were very cheerful on the whole, especially in the evenings, when one more day was done and the cooler hours of night were drawing on. There was, too, in our ward, a subaltern who enjoyed a great reputation for the funniness of his stories, and used to keep us by the hour in fits of Homeric laughter—albeit during the whole time he remained with us I only heard one story told right through, and that was not a funny one at all. But after the first few words of each tale he would break off and begin to laugh so loud and long, and so infectiously withal, that for the rest of it he could not speak, and we could not have listened if he had, so utterly worn out were we with laughter. In this way one story

would last for several nights without becoming stale.

At length I wrote a letter home, to tell them quite definitely not to expect me back this time, as I was getting well so rapidly that I should soon be moved into the convalescent camp. I licked up the letter and franked it, and Bob had just taken it up the hill to the Orderly Room when our doctor came in and told us that next day the *Aquitania* would arrive, in her new hospital-ship garb, in Lemnos harbour; and that, as soon as she was coaled, this Australian hospital would be evacuated, and the *Aquitania* would take all her patients home. Moreover, the Hospital had received orders to be ready to pack up and go back to the Gallipoli Peninsula one fortnight from that date.

This news, coming as it did from our only reliable source of information, immensely impressed all but the most pessimistic of us, who argued the simplicity and the probability of our being moved across to the convalescent camp in the course of the aforesaid fortnight. But the majority of us were inclined to believe it, and would have been hugely cheered in consequence, if it had not been for the endless disappoint-

ments we had endured already. So it was with a mild indifference, next morning, that we watched the gigantic *Aquitania*, a ship of forty-seven thousand tons, glide up majestically to her anchorage. She was a magnificent sight—being painted all over a dazzling white, with yellow masts and the four great smoke-stacks and the innumerable ventilators yellow, too—like the private yacht of a mighty, sybaritic god.

The more we watched her, the more our hopes and our enthusiasm grew; and the grimmer became the dread of never seeing her luxurious inside. She was even more desirable than the vanished *Mauretania*, and I believe that that night, as we watched her turn from white to gold, from gold to pink, from pink to mauve and finally fading into the darkness of the harbour, each one of us secretly felt almost sure that soon he would be racing home in her to England; and the sight of her at dawn, with colliers made fast to either side, made up a great deal for the news that the porridge had run completely out, and that we were to be fed once more on bully-beef.

CHAPTER XIV

AT LAST !

ALL day long we watched the great leviathan, with the terrible dread that she would sail without us as the *Mauretania* had done a day or two before. We watched for signs of smoke coming out of her funnels. We watched for the least hint that either of the colliers was casting off from her huge sides, showing that she was coaled and therefore ready to sail.

At about midday we saw the first of the colliers move away, and again, in the late afternoon, the second followed suit. Five great black stains of coal dust were smeared up the white sides of the great ship, as though some god (with exceedingly dirty fingers) had set her down from heaven upon the sea. And then—oh ! horrors !—we saw smoke curling up from two of the four great funnels, and the ship herself swing slowly round and point down to the mouth of the harbour, and almost imperceptibly the *Aquitania* glided down the bay.

Moans and groans arose among us. Shill-

ings in payment of the bets of the pessimists were passed from bed to bed, and a gloomy silence fell upon the ward.

The doctor came in a little later, and was met by a storm of bitter sarcasm. Then we accused him of being a false prophet and even of being an incurable optimist. "Why? What's the matter?" he asked. "You're going home in the *Aquitania*, and I've got to stay here."

"The *Aquitania*'s gone," we said.

"Nonsense!" said he. "They *promised* to take you this time."

"They promised before," we retorted, "and will no doubt promise again." And another gloomy silence ensued, to be interrupted by the entry of Ralph, who looked from one to the other of our woeful faces in bewilderment. "What's up?" he asked.

Someone volunteered the explanation. "The *Aquitania*'s gone," he said. Ralph burst out laughing. "No, she isn't," he said; "she's only moved lower down the harbour, so as to be able to slip out easier when she wants to." And, right enough, when we looked out once more, we could see our treasure at anchor once again, at the very mouth of the harbour.

Next day, at dawn, we looked to see if she

had given us the slip during the night ; but she was there all right, and we began to grow almost confident.

I spent a few hours then in attempting to dress with what clothes I could find left in my valise. Being now fantastically thin, I found there was no difficulty in slipping on all the clothes there were—i.e., a pair of riding breeches, a shirt, and a tunic. My boots had been roasted as hard as iron, so Bob found me a pair of slippers. He could not raise me a hat, but produced instead a woollen Balaclava sleeping helmet, which might keep some of the sun off my wound. For collar and tie I used a triangular bandage.

Then my valise was packed. In it Ralph put four boxes of Turkish Delight that he had fetched from the Windmill, and which he advised me to say I had captured in a Turkish officer's dug-out.

The walking cases were the first to leave the hospital. We saw them hobbling out of all the tents up to the motor ambulances, where they sat, waving and shouting to the friends they were leaving behind, until the ambulances disappeared over the brow of the hill.

At last our turn came. Bob went round

the ward with a pencil and paper and we all exchanged addresses, in case, as he said, the wish of his life was granted, and he might one day go to London. After this he made us a little speech of farewell, and apologies for any discomforts we might have had to put up with by reason of the remoteness of the camp from civilisation or of his own short temper. It is curious how the best-tempered people in the world imagine they are as fiery-tempered and unpleasant as the worst.

The stretcher-bearers then came in, and I, being nearest to the door, was the first to be carried up to the ambulance. Four of us were put in, we waved good-bye to the ward, where we had spent five weeks, and off the motor started.

For the first time, now, I could see the camp properly and the Greek "village" through which the dreadful road descended to the sea. Think of the smallest and the dirtiest possible village in Ireland; then imagine a place of equal size and architecture, but twice as dirty, and you will have an idea of the village by that Australian hospital in Lemnos.

The road was a succession of pits and boulders, and the pain it gave us to be jolted

over it once more was horrible. Still, we were going home; so nothing mattered now.

At the bottom of the squalid village the road ran back, round to the left, along the shore, out of which it had been bodily (and badly) blasted and dug away. Thence it led on to the wooden jetty. The motor went to the extreme end of this and stopped.

More stretcher-bearers came forward and set me down on the plank pier in the shade of the motor ambulance. The scent of the sea so close and cool and the noise of the lapping of the water against the boats tied up alongside the jetty were deliciously soothing after our rough passage down from the camp.

What should I see on the right-hand side of the jetty but the very same old motor-lighter that had taken me ashore, weeks ago, at Suvla Bay! Her crew was different, but I knew her by her number and by the bullet scars upon her iron sides.

While I was gazing at her reminiscently I was attracted by the sound of laughter to my left, and, looking round, I saw a most surprising spectacle. Half the Australian stretcher-bearers were divesting themselves of their already scanty attire and plunging off the jetty into the sea, under which they

remained for several seconds, to reappear with their hands full of—playing cards! Time after time they dived in and brought up pack after pack, as well as a number of odd cards. It appeared that a boat full of playing cards, destined by the Red Cross for the use of the ten thousand odd sick and wounded in Lemnos, had been upset at the very jetty a few days before, and now the whole sea-floor was shimmering with cards. At that moment an important-looking officer came striding along the pier and came up to the bashful orderlies. "Put these four cases back into the ambulance at once!" he ordered them, and strode away. My heart sank. So the orders had been cancelled at the last moment! And once more we should have to endure that terrible journey in the car!

After a scanty toilet the orderlies lifted me back on to my shelf in the car, and when the other three were in the driver jumped up into his seat, and we waited for orders to move off.

Soon the officer returned. "Put these four cases aboard the lighter at once!" he said, and went away once more. We grinned with pleasure as the orderlies carried us on board. My three companions they laid down

on deck, but I was carried down into the hold. The hold was almost full already, and I noticed that I had been mistaken for a private soldier, so placed with them below. It was a fortunate mistake, for I thus got an opportunity of seeing two men out of my own platoon, one of whom, lying next me, I had previously heard, was dead. He looked as thin and as delicate as Venetian glass. His right leg had been cut off above the knee (which he proceeded proudly to show me) and he had contracted dysentery in hospital and almost died of it. For weeks tinned milk had been his diet, and finally champagne. However, he seemed very cheery indeed, and it was altogether a very pleasant meeting.

On the other side of me was a Maori infantryman, also without one leg. A man of colossal physique, but clearly in great pain.

In front of me, beyond a few rows of stretchers, were the bows of the lighter, and across them was hung a filthy sail, behind the cover of which the crew, consisting of two or three oil-begrimed sailors, was cooking its tea. They had sardines, some bread and coffee, and gave us cigarettes all round.

Soon the engines started, but this, apparently, was only "to make it harder"; for we did not move off for nearly an hour

afterwards. The engines shook the whole boat cruelly, and we were half hysterical with abuse and sweating with pain and the stuffiness of the hold by the time we started. But, once under way, the motion of the boat was easier. After a long while—for we were heavily laden and moving slowly enough—we came to a stop, and through the skylight we could see the stupendously tall sides of the *Aquitania* towering over us—tier upon tier of decks and portholes, and row upon row of faces. Cranes were rattling everywhere, and footsteps began to sound incessantly above us on the iron deck of the lighter, where the walking cases were shuffling towards the big ship's gangway.

Over all the noise the lighter's engines clanked and shook us like jellies. After another hour of waiting we managed to get a complaint about them taken to the skipper, who promptly ordered them to be stopped. The relief was enormous, and gradually our nerves and tempers began to settle down.

There followed a long and tedious period of waiting. We began to get very hungry as the sun set. The noise on the deck above our heads had ceased, all the wounded from there having, apparently, already gone on board.

Suddenly the engines started again and we moved on, along the water-line of the *Aquitania*. It was then that we realised how huge a ship she was by the time it took to move along her entire length round to the crane that was to lift us aboard.

It was quite dark, and the lamps were lit, when the crane let my cradle fall with a crash on to the deck, where a medical officer asked me whether I was surgical. Learning that I supposed I was, he gave some orders to the bearers, who took me off for a long walk, round decks, up and down endless corridors and staircases, till eventually they brought me up on to the topmost deck of all, right aft, and carried me through a large oak door into my new ward.

If I had been a "walking case" I am sure I should have fallen down with amazement on entering this palatial ward. The contrast with the stuffy, sandy little tent I had just left was almost unbearably acute; for I now found myself suddenly set down in an enormous hall, lit by huge brazen chandeliers of electric lights. A vast glass-covered dome rose up in the centre, and radiating from it were a number of transepts, themselves large rooms, oak-panelled to the ceilings, with deeply carved armorial bear-

ings running round the frieze. The windows, instead of being portholes, were large and square, set in frames of oak, just like the windows of some old country house. The floor, of polished oak, was covered with rows of large four-posted beds, spread with linen of a dazzling whiteness; and as I looked about me to see where I was going to be put I heard ironical cheers proceeding from the right transept, and there I saw five of my late companions in the Lemnos tent lying luxuriously back against piles of soft and spotless pillows and smoking huge cigars. "Where on earth have you been all this time?" "Had a good swim?" "Here comes a Turkish prisoner," "You're just too late for dinner," etc., they shouted out.

I was put into a bed in their corner and given a beautiful pair of pyjamas, and had scarcely got into bed before a neat little steward came bowing up and handed me a menu. Long and lovingly I gazed upon the list of delicacies, recalling foods of whose very existence I had forgotten, before I could choose my dinner—soup, fish, entrée, joint, pudding and savoury—and we had never had any dinner at all while we had been on shore.

The others told me they had had some

champagne with their dinner, and I asked for some too. But the sister (yes! there were nurses in *this* hospital) told me I could only have that when specially ordered by the doctor, and then only two ounces at a time. So I had to do with a bottle of Neapolitan Lager beer, the most delicious drink, but which, unfortunately, after my long abstinence, set my head singing as though I had been drinking wine for hours.

Yes, that dinner was certainly excellent, and so was the cigar that followed it. We all felt suddenly a thousand times better than we had done for weeks, and almost ashamed to be in such luxury, especially when we thought of the ten thousand or so sick and wounded who were still grilling in the tents on shore. We did not move out of the harbour that night, and indeed, now that we were in such comfort, we were not so frantically anxious to leave Lemnos behind. After all, we had been a very happy family in our little hut, and there was something far more personal and friendly about those orderlies and doctors than there ever could be in a great hospital city like the *Aquitania*, with her population of over 4,000 sick and wounded, her huge staff of matrons and nurses, doctors, orderlies and stewards, and

her crew. There, we had been friends; here, we were only numbers and cases. I was No. 31 and a G.S.W. (which means gunshot wound, for apparently doctors are unaware that rifles have superseded guns in war). Besides, there were too many strange faces in the ward, with just a faint suspicion of the "Yes, sir; no, sir; who the hell are you, sir?" spirit; of hair oil and of regimental swank.

We survivors of the little Australian hut began to feel a trifle grimy and unfashionable compared with the immaculateness of one or two of the "home for a rest cure" cases.

We sent for the keeper of the barber's shop, to bring a selection of *Aquitania* souvenirs, and choosing a few highly glazed giant post-cards of the ship, and some knives and links with the ship engraved upon them, dispatched them, with many messages, to Bob and Ralph by one of the Australians who had come on board to see off one of his wounded pals. We knew they would value them.

All that evening, and far into the night, the work of embarking the wounded went on without a pause. A large hospital ship, once a P. & O. liner, came alongside to unload into us. We could just see the top of her funnels

and her mast through the starboard window. She looked like a mere tug-boat beside the *Aquitania*.

From my window, in the strong moonlight, I could see the broad deck outside covered with mattresses, on which lay rows and rows of wounded (it was quite warm outside, and much too warm in our ward). Just underneath the window were a few Turkish prisoners, wounded, lying amongst our own men; they looked supremely content, and were jabbering away to each other like children at the pantomime between the scenes. There was one rather upsetting case just there, a young Highlander, who was shouting and yelling, and had to be held down by four orderlies. In our part of the ward, too, there was a very serious case. Poor fellow, he had to be spread out upon two beds, suffering from half a dozen wounds, including a gash from a bayonet, delirious, blood-poisoned arm, and dysentery. Night and day doctors, nurses and orderlies attended him. Every dressing was like an operation; and three nights running he was taken away for serious operations. The room reeked of chloroform. Whenever one awoke at night there was sure to be our tireless, at least sleepless, doctor busy at his

bed, and generally one particular orderly, quite a boy, who, with his large, half-frightened eyes full of sympathy, looked after him as gently as a woman. It was a great delight to us when after about a week the doctor told us that No. — was “out of danger” at last. It had been a terrific fight, and did a great deal to recall to me a sense of the value of human life, a sense which war seems to dull somewhat.

There were only two other dangerous cases in this ward, who made a great noise, shouting and swearing, carrying on their battles in delirium. After a while they died.

The rest of us were very comfortable and happy. I found that by great efforts—having now obtained a proper crutch instead of a broom—it was possible for me to wriggle out on to the after deck. It took about 20 minutes’ work to get there, but it was quite worth while. Spacious and snowy white, the deck right aft was dotted with long chairs to lie in. In front, and towering above one, were the four gigantic yellow smoke-stacks, and monster yellow ventilators, and row after row of life-boats; while over all spread out the serene blue sky of the Mediterranean.

Looking aft, one could see the creamy wake of the ship stretching away for miles,

behind the fluttering ensign, too often, alas ! at half-mast. And generally the brass-coloured cliffs and hills of the mainland or of the islands were slipping past us, and fading away, to right and left.

There, on the deck, one would lie, in the bright sun and the cooling breeze, and the steward would bring round tea and cakes upon a little tray. I remember one afternoon particularly, when we rushed past the three great prongs of Southern Greece. We could see the barren mountains rising sheer out of the water, and between them the wide valleys, with their villages, gleaming white, all dotted up the slopes and along the shore. We were quite close to land, and passed three large ships as we swung up to the right, round the corner of Greece. How slow and insignificant they seemed beside our forty-seven thousand tonner ! So we raced on, between clustering islands and long promontories. It felt like being driven by an expert taxi-driver across Piccadilly Circus—we twisted and turned and quickened and slowed down : every moment it seemed we should collide with a headland or run over an island !

Another beautiful scene was while passing up the Straits of Messina in the dusk—a delicate operation for so large a boat. Sicily

and Italy were both looking their best that day, or perhaps their second best, for nothing could have exceeded the beauty of the Bay of Naples as we entered it late one afternoon. Vesuvius seemed to be sprinkled with gold dust, and the City of Naples itself, as we glided into the harbour, was almost hidden in a deep blue mist, with gleaming white and golden spires and roofs peeping above it here and there. Indeed, it looked like a picture of fairyland.

We had put in at Naples for coal and water, and stayed there about 30 hours. The morning after our arrival some Neapolitans came on board to welcome us—beautiful Italian ladies first, and then, into our ward, came some Neapolitan Boy Scouts, with daggers hanging from their belts, carrying a stretcher laden to overflowing with the most exquisite masses of flowers—lilies and carnations, and many other kinds whose names I did not know. They came round the beds, and threw a handful on to each of them. Our thanks and our conversation were limited to gestures, to laughter and to smiles ; and soon they passed into the next ward.

It was at Naples that the authorities arranged for cables to be sent by us to our people to warn them of our home-coming, at

fourpence a word. One party of men on the deck outside had only managed to collect the money for their cables at the last moment, just as the ship was moving out of the harbour. So they wrapped up the money in the paper, and threw it down to the little boat that was taking the telegrams ashore. But the bundle fell too short, and, coming undone, spilt all the money into the sea. Thereupon the men in the little boat, after many gesticulations and shouts, rowed up to the spot, collecting the scraps of paper and picking them up. Every one of those telegrams reached its destination.

It was a great relief to us to have passed Malta, for rumour had it that we were to be left there. Now, there was only one more chance of not getting home after all, and that was that we had to call in at Gibraltar for orders. But we need not have been afraid. We reached Gibraltar early one morning, and only stopped there for ten minutes, being told to proceed at once to Southampton !

It was now nearing the end of September, and as we rushed through the Straits of Gibraltar the sky turned from a cloudless blue into a dull grey, and the sea assumed the deep grey-green of home waters in the autumn. The weather suddenly became

cold, and the waves rose up with crests of foam.

But the huge ship remained as steady as a rock. We all had our blankets put on our beds (for up till now the sheets alone had been too warm, day and night), realising with a shock that the summer was really over for us now, and settled down to read again. The ship had a good library on board, belonging to the Cunard Company, and there were in addition innumerable other books of lighter calibre, including some magazines that had been given us by the English residents at Naples.

On the second day in the Atlantic I was taken to the "picture palace" to be X-rayed. It was a long journey, and I was very sorry for the stretcher-bearers, as I must have put on about two stone in weight since leaving Lemnos. The picture palace—one of the eight on board—was on the "garden deck"—an elaborate affair with trellis-work and tubs of flowers all over it, designed, I presume, for American millionaires. How lost, how unimportant, they would have felt upon that deck now, when it was thick with wounded Englishmen! In the picture palace the bearers left me in the stretcher on the floor, and I began to wonder how the two

doctors would be able to lift me up alone on to the table, when suddenly one of them stooped down and picked me up like a piece of paper, without an effort. He then pressed the button, and the sparks began to fly from the machine while he took photographs. There was something so funny about it that I could not keep from laughing, and my shaking blurred the first photograph; so, for the rest, the second doctor leant upon me with all his might to keep me motionless. I nearly burst by the end of it; but the results were good. The fractures of leg and arm were shown very clearly on the plates. They then took me back to bed again.

A day or two later the colour of the sea became more and more distinctly English, and the Channel grew more and more densely crowded with merchant vessels and transports ploughing their way to and fro. At last, in the afternoon, we saw the well-known glint of the sunlit Needles, and then the whole south coast of the Isle of Wight. Soon afterwards the old round forts came into view, rising up in the middle of the sea, and then the pathetic rusty line of ancient ironclads condemned to the ship-breakers' yards—the old familiar sailing yachts rounding the old red buoys, the pier at Ryde, the crowded

front, and in the background, most welcome sight of all, the bright green fields and the staid, dark clumps of elm trees standing round the cottages.

We had slowed down considerably now, and a pinnacle rushed up alongside us with orders for the skipper. Apparently we had missed the evening tide by minutes, and should have to anchor where we were until next day.

It was a beautiful evening. There seemed more "body" in the atmosphere at home than in the East. The sunset was more mellow, the horizon not so sharp, and, best of all, there was twilight. In the twilight we saw five aeroplanes wheeling and diving about over our heads, and torpedo-boat destroyers racing out upon some quest into the English Channel. And then the shores, on either side of us, faded away into the gathering darkness, as though falling peacefully asleep, and we went back into the ward, some on stretchers and some on crutches, one by one, to go to sleep in the certainty that we should land in England the next day.

When we woke up we found ourselves in dock already, and heard the whistle of the first train-load of wounded starting off. All day the scuttling of feet and the rattling of

the cranes once more went on. One by one all my friends were taken off to their respective trains ; and at last, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, I found myself being carried down the grand staircase of the *Aquitania*, flight after flight, till we reached the gangway to the wharf. And five minutes later I was lying in a comfortable bed in a long carriage with a dozen others, in the 23rd ambulance train to leave the ship, being offered chocolates and cigarettes and soup and beef with Yorkshire pudding.

Everyone knows the journey from Southampton to London, and what a London hospital is like. So there is no need to describe them here. Suffice it to say that as I was being carried through the crowded London railway station to the ambulance I heard the first news of the beginning of the glorious victory of our troops at Loos, and I had the privilege of sharing the motor to the hospital with one of the first of the wounded to come home from that battle. He was wild with excitement and delight, and kept on repeating to himself aloud, "The guns and the cavalry are through ! The guns and the cavalry ! They're over the trenches !" And as they took me up the steps and through the gates of the hospital I felt for the first time

the forlornness of our own little struggle in Gallipoli, where, as in a nightmare, success and glory had danced before our eyes, only to turn to horror and regret as we stretched out our hands to grasp them. And then, as I got into bed, and heard around me laughter and happy voices, and outside the roar and the hoot of the traffic, as of old, in the street, it was as though I had returned from some travel in a land of dreams. What I had thought had been July and August and September grew suddenly timeless and unreal. Those long, hot weeks of sheer enjoyment at Mitylene, those fierce, wild days of mad endeavour in Gallipoli, and the long, monotonous, comfortless weeks on the Isle of Lemnos—all seemed the folly of some other man's imagination. We were only linked with them by the ever real memory of our own dear dead.

THE END.

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